



# **The Trial Statements of Ray Luc Levasseur**



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Arm The Spirit ★ Solidarity

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# Introduction

There are political prisoners in America. Among them in the American gulag is Ray Luc Levasseur. Levasseur was captured in 1984 after 10 years underground. Subsequently he and 6 others were indicted for United Freedom Front bombings that targeted U.S. military facilities and corporate property. UFF actions sought to expose U.S. war crimes in Central America and corporate collusion with the racist apartheid system in South Africa. The UFF inflicted damage to property, not people. Levasseur, Tom Manning, Jaan Laaman and Richard Williams were tried, convicted and sentenced to lengthy prison terms of 45 to 56 years. (Barbara Curzi and Carol Soucier received shorter sentences and were eventually released. Charges against Pat Gros were dismissed.)

Following the UFF trial, Levasseur and 7 others were indicted on Seditious Conspiracy and RICO (Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations) charges. The government alleged that in addition to the UFF bombings the group carried out other actions from 1974 to 1984 which sought independence for Puerto Rico, release of political prisoners, and an end to prison and police brutality. Three, including Levasseur, went to trial. They were acquitted of Seditious Conspiracy and the RICO charges were dismissed when the jury deadlocked in favor of acquittal.



OHIO 7 - back row standing: Richard Williams, Tom Manning, Ray Luc Levasseur  
front: Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi-Laaman, Carol Soucier-Manning, Pat Gros Levasseur

The statements contained herein are Levasseur's sentencing statement for the UFF trial, and his opening and closing statements to the jury in the Sedition trial. They not only refute the prosecutors' attempt to criminalize political struggle, they also are a return indictment charging the U.S. government and corporate criminals with gross human rights violations. This is a real story of class conflict and racial injustice. A life story of love, rage and revolution which embraces a future in which no child will suffer from poverty, racism and war.



"The reason that I went under was because I wanted to contribute to building a revolutionary resistance movement in this country that has the ability to defend itself at any stage of its development, at any stage of history, regardless of what particular activity it is engaged in at the time. You cannot expose all the organizations of a political movement to the government. Some of them have to be away from its eyes and ears."



# UFF Trial Sentencing Statement

I want to thank all my comrades that are here today. I want to thank you for demonstrating your support and I hope that you continue to support all the POWs and political prisoners that are on trial now and will be continuing to come to trial in the next two years. If you support national liberation, you support the POWs that are in captivity and on trial.

I have spoken at great length during the course of this trial. I have spoken very clearly about what the issues are.

It is now the time for my comrades to be heard. Jaan was here yesterday and spoke and Richard will be here this afternoon. The others will follow.

They will all speak about the same thing, the need to build a revolutionary resistance movement.

I came here today with just a brief statement and as I make this statement, I am going to face my accusers, because my statement is directed to the United States government, and its functionaries and enforcers, as you can see them all around me - primarily the U.S. attorneys [Charles Rose and John Gallagher] and Judge [Glasser].

First, I want to express my outrage at the obscene sentence you gave my comrade yesterday of 53 years in the penitentiary. You have sentenced him to half a century in the penitentiary. A man who has committed virtually his entire adult life to fighting racism and imperialist war.

People like you must be terribly afraid of his principles, of his revolutionary ideals and his ability as a fighter, because he's disarmed. He has no weapon now, other than those principles and the ability to fight and carry on.

And while what you have done is to me obscene and disgusting, that you would do that to a man's life, a revolutionary's life, it didn't surprise me in the least. Not one bit.

As political prisoners and as revolutionaries, we don't expect anything different than the kind of abuse we've been subjected to and will continue to be subjected to by people such as yourselves and all of the agents and shock troops that you have at your disposal and just as sure as what happened here on March 25th, I can tell you now that we'll be beaten in the penitentiary as it's happened before and we will be abused and we will be isolated.

The reason for this is because of our principles and what we represent.

We are not motivated by the profit motive so they can't control us like other people. It's what we represent here in our hearts, in the class background that we are from, and that we support national liberation both inside the

borders of this country and in countries like South Africa that makes us a threat, apparently, to the powers-that-be of which you are a part.

To me, as I said in the opening, it is the height of moral hypocrisy for you to put that kind of sentence on my comrade, representing a government that has formed alliances with the racist government of South Africa, with the fascist government of Chile and supports the bombing campaign against the people of El Salvador.

But again, not surprising and not unexpected, because you are here to do the bidding and represent the ruling class. Those people that run those factories in that town where I worked, where my mother still works, those people that sent me to war, to fight their wars, those people who demand that so many penitentiaries be filled and to fill them with people of color and poor people, that's whose bidding you are here to do. And you do it well.

You defend the worst aspects of the system that has given you so much privilege, the worst aspects of it. Like the racist murders of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpers, whose killers are now free to go out and kill Third World people again - the killers of Michael Stewart who were absolved of that murder during the course of this trial, a point that wasn't lost on the jury, believe me, even though you two over there tried to prevent that name from coming up.

The three of you - Rose, Gallagher, Judge Glasser - you know, you are simply functionaries of a government and you wallow in its decadence.

You must get both a personal and political pleasure from being the enforcers and the functionaries for a system that is responsible for so much injustice, that is responsible for so much racism, that is responsible for so much exploitation and suffering.

But there is one thing I want to make clear today in the event that it wasn't said during the course of the trial, and that is that you are not worth the dirt under the fingernails of an Azanian freedom fighter who today is fighting for the liberation of South Africa. You have chosen to ally yourselves with this government and what it's doing there.

You can tell that to your grandchildren, while the grandchildren of the people that are carrying the liberation struggle on now in South Africa, *their* grandchildren will dance on the graves of the racist fascists who rule South Africa today - because they won't be there tomorrow.

And neither will this stinking system, that's why 53 years doesn't intimidate me because I don't think this system will be around for the next 53 years.

The arrogance of your own power cannot overshadow the righteous anger and the determined struggle of the people of El Salvador. Not the fascists who run the government there, who have their palms greased by this government, but the people who work and toil and struggle and suffer so they can have a freer life for their children.

And your voices, the three of you during the course of this trial, the government you represent, your voices are a stark and empty contrast when



compared to the courageous example of New Afrikan Freedom Fighter Mtyari Sundiata, who sacrificed his life for the freedom of the New Afrikan nation.

The government said in its report that we are unrepentant and yesterday Mr. Rose said that we show no remorse.

You want me to get on my knees here today and be sorry because I support the struggle in South Africa? It won't happen now, it won't happen next year and it won't happen the year after that. It won't happen before any Parole Board because I support the struggle now and I'll support it until Black people control South Africa and Black people are free there and the land is free.

And that day will happen, and Botha, if he isn't lynched, will be here in Miami somewhere.

To show remorse because the offices of the South African government were bombed and they lost some work? While every day during the course of this trial Black people were killed on the streets of South Africa? You want me to apologize for that? You want me to retract that I support that? The resistance, both in South Africa, in other countries and throughout the world and here, to drive those fascists from power?

You support it [indicating the judge and prosecutors]. You support that system. You tell your grandchildren you support apartheid. you tell them which side of the struggle you were on. You tell your grandchildren that you sent these revolutionaries, the Ohio 7 to the penitentiary for the rest of their lives because they support the struggle in South Africa. Because they support the struggle of the Black Nation here in the United States.

You tell them which side of the freedom struggle you were on. I fought on both sides. I went to Vietnam and now I'm fighting on the side that's fighting for freedom.

I'll never apologize because IBM got bombed. Not when they supply computers to the police department in South Africa, the computers that run the prison system there.

**I support the actions of the United Freedom Front and I support the struggle in South Africa for people to be free. And that's what I tell my children. My children say they don't understand why you people do what you do. They will some day. Because they understand how racism works. they understand that Malcolm X's father was killed by the Klan. They understand why the Puerto Rican struggle has produced heroic fighters like Lolita Lebron. They understand that. We had made bedtime stories of the freedom struggles in this world today for our children.**

Yet they don't understand that, because we fight against racism and injustice, why there is a government that wants us in prison for the rest of our lives.

My six year old daughter said, where is the government? I want to punch it in the nose. She doesn't understand about you and you and you, but



she will some day. She doesn't understand how you can support something like that.

Mr. Rose asked you yesterday to send a message to the people of the world, to the governments of the world with your sentence, a message about "terrorism" and how this government will deal with revolutionary resistance within its own borders, its "home-grown terrorism", as he likes to call it.

But the people of the world already know about terrorism and the United States because the United States government has been exporting terrorism since it first landed on these shores here. You want the people to get a message from what you're doing here? Bring the message to the children of South Africa who have been particularly singled out during the course of this trial for brutality and imprisonment without charge. And death from rubber bullets, from machine guns. They've been singled out during the course of this trial and they have called for the United States government to stop supporting the racist government of South Africa, for U.S. corporations to withdraw their support from South Africa as they die everyday, because they know the South African government will fall without the political and economic support of the United States.

You ask the children of South Africa about the United States and terrorism. They are not going to talk about the Ohio 7 trial. They are going to talk about the support that this government has given the fascists there.

You want to give the people of the world a message. You want to give Duarte a message. You talk to the Salvadoran people, they will tell you who is supplying those bombs to the Air Force in El Salvador. They will tell you who is running the reconnaissance missions. You go talk to that seven-year-old child who drew that drawing I showed the jurors here. What happened to her family? She'll tell you about the United States and terrorism.

And talk to the Nicaraguan people and ask them what the Contras, supported and financed by the CIA and the United States government are doing. Ask them about the attacks carried out against coffee workers, teachers and medical workers. Ask them about the school that was burned down.

Give your message to those people and see if they are receptive to it. You'd better take your message to Miami. That's the only people that are going to listen to it. They are the only people that are going to accept it.

Talk to the people of Angola who are now being further attacked by South African government troops and Savimbi, a CIA stooge who Reagan embraces as a freedom fighter while he attacks from bases near the South African border killing indiscriminately.

Ask the people of Chile whose government, whose democratically elected government was overthrown by a CIA coup and a fascist was put into power and he's been in power and he's still in power. He's supported by the United States government - it is clearly one of the fascist governments in the world, the government of Chile.

Ask the Chilean people, ask the survivors, family members of those who were herded into the soccer stadiums. See if they are receptive to your message about what the source of terrorism is in this world.

Ask them what they think of international law, if Nuremberg has any meaning anymore.

Go to the Occupied West Bank, talk to the Palestinian people there. Talk to the survivors of Sabra and Shatilla camps, who were murdered by Amerikan-supplied weapons [where some 3000 people were massacred by Israeli backed Lebanese militias].

Talk to their children and ask the people of the oppressed nations within the borders of this country. You ask Native Americans what they think of the United States government and its love for freedom. You go to the reservations and talk to the Native Americans and ask them if they are threatened by us or if they are threatened by the United States government and its policies. Ask the people in Big Mountain, Arizona who are now going to be subjected to the largest forced removal of people in this country since the Japanese Americans were interned during World War II. More theft of native land to supply the mining companies.

But the people of Big Mountain are not going to move when the time comes because they have said they are going to resist and when they do, the government is going to send the United States Marshal's Service in. If you want to see terrorism in practice like you did at Wounded Knee, take a vacation and go with these guys there [indicating Marshals in the courtroom] while they target practice on people of color and enjoy it.

Ask the people of Puerto Rico where the U.S. government illegally under national law, colonizes the people of Puerto Rico. Go to the barrios in this city.

Ask the families of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpers about terrorism. You've got to send a message to Margaret Thatcher? Why don't you send a message to the family of Michael Stewart and Eleanor Bumpers? And tell them that you're damned sorry you live in a fucking city that's full of killer cops. Who are cut loose to go out there and kill again. And they single our Black and Hispanic people for their dirty work. Ask the people of families of those who were murdered in Attica, ask the people of those who are descended from slavery, who now live in ghettos occupied by killer cops.

You are appointed by Ronald Reagan, who sit there at the behest of Ronald Reagan, and you mean to tell me that you represent freedom and justice.

There was more than one position in this trial. One was the interest of the United States government and U.S. imperialism. The historic violator of human rights.

That's the way most people in the world look at it. Not Thatcher, not Mitterand, not fascists Pinochet or Botha, your allies. That's who you want to send a message to. Go kill more Black people in South Africa. Hit them



harder. Keep that government in power. Keep those minerals flowing here.

This government embraces racism. You speak of the sanctity of the law and you say you decry violence. I don't believe you. There isn't anybody in this courtroom that believes you. Not even Rose. Because he knows you are here to perform a task. He doesn't believe it himself. Just spewing out his own propaganda, to disguise his own racism.

I brought up briefly during the closing statement international law and Nuremberg. The spirit of Nuremberg, I mean. Because, you know, you can die - you die when they stick you in the oven. Turn that carbon monoxide on. But you are just as dead when they shoot you in the streets of New York City. You are just as dead if they shoot you in the streets of Soweto in South Africa.

You're just as dead if you're a Black person in South Africa without land and a means of subsistence living next to a five hundred acre farm while your family goes without food and your children die before they reach the age of five because of malnutrition-related diseases. You are just as dead, and the suffering is just as real to you, you know, as the people that died in Germany, in those ovens, whether they be labor organizers or whether they be Jews.

I don't understand - I mean I *do* understand - why you think the way you do. But it still bothers me that you show so little compassion for the struggle of human beings for a better life. And that you feel you serve your interests best by sending somebody like Jaan Laaman to prison for 53 years when he has been fighting to prevent that from happening.

And that makes you a collaborator, just like those who collaborated in Germany. You found a better life for yourself here. All three of you live somewhat of a privileged life, and now you are going to collaborate with the government that is just as guilty and just as directly involved with the murder of people, primarily Third World people we are talking about, that's involved in the oppression of nations, both here and throughout the world.

And history is not going to be too kind to you somewhere down the road for your role and the roles that others like you have played.

If history teaches us anything, it is that this country will embrace fascism before it will accede to the basic human rights of oppressed nations and peoples.

The other voice that was heard in the trial was the voice of revolutionary resistance; support of national liberation struggles; support for the right of self-determination as a basic human right that has to be safeguarded and guaranteed before other human rights become meaningful.

And we do advocate armed struggle, and we do advocate socialist revolution.

And I think that has something to do with the kind of sentences you are going to impose, that the sentences you impose are of a political nature just as this trial was of a political nature.

You don't like communists and you don't like revolutionaries and you

don't like people who support what you think apparently is the wrong side in South Africa. And you are going to punish them and you are going to send the message that Mr. Rose wants to go around the world.

What we represent to this government is a reality that they would like to destroy. White working class people who make them tremble at the thought that we would be in on digging the grave of U.S. imperialism.

But we are not exceptional nor do we view ourselves as such. We clearly know and have experienced the exploitation of working for the bosses from can't see in the morning till can't see at night.

We have worked in their sweatshop factories. We have worked for the minimum wage jobs, the low paying junk jobs, the service work. We have worked in agricultural jobs, in the labor pool. Believe me, we know what you got to do when the baby needs to have some milk. And when it's time for the rent to be paid. Nobody ever paid it for us.

We've both fought in and fought against this country's imperialist wars. And I've seen and witnessed some of the most vicious racism that imperialism breeds, both in Vietnam during the war and in the streets of New York during the upcoming war. We've been in this country's prison camps before, populated by people of color and the poor, we've had a taste of what is experienced daily by more than half a million people in this country's prison camps. Locked down.

In prison I was hungry. I know what it's like to be hungry. And I was sick with other prisoners. I know what it's like to be sick and not to be given medical care. Those experiences I'll never forget and all too many people have that kind of experience.

I am simply part of a revolutionary resistance movement that has suffered setbacks over the years, but we have not suffered failure and the government recognizes this as it continues to expand its counterinsurgency program.

The government claims somewhat of a propaganda victory after spending another two million dollars on this trial. But the victory is clearly ours. This was a political trial and we put the issues clearly out there. To see one simple indicator of that are those 40 counts where there were no convictions and that simply is one.

I firmly believe that we set an example here that will carry on, that it was a good example and the only example we could set for people based on our commitment.

The government never seems to realize that we are not exceptional people in any way but simply come from the conditions that capitalism has created. There are more fighters like us and there will be more to come, and your 53 years has got nothing to do with that.

We will be held in extremely punitive conditions and isolation, but there is no penitentiary in this stinking system of yours, there is no cell dark or isolated enough, that will ever stop me from fighting for what is right, from organizing for what we've got to do, to encourage other prisoners to fight

for their rights. You'll never, ever break that spirit, ever, and you can send those goon squads time and time again - I know I'll see them. You can send those neo-fascists they've got locked up there who collaborate with the administration. You can send them. You can kill us, you can bury us, but you can't bury our spirit.

In closing, based on what happened yesterday it is clear what the prosecutors want, as well as what they represent. They say I am part of an armed unit that carried out attacks against military installations and multinational corporations. While you are here to defend those interests and align yourself with apartheid and genocide, I am here to say that I support these actions as I have throughout the trial.

I support these actions because I support struggle for freedom and national liberation, not because I like violence. I do that because I want it clear which side of the freedom struggle I'm on. I am proud to be a freedom fighter and I say simply that the struggle will continue until victory.

Victory to national liberation and socialist revolution!

Brooklyn, New York  
April 1986





# **Sedition Trial Opening Statement**

My name is Ray Luc Levasseur. Luc is my grandfather's name. I grew up in a small mill town in Maine. My father was born in Quebec, a French nation in Canada. He and his father came to this country to look for work in the woollen mills and shoe factories of Maine. That's how I trace my roots back to Quebec. When I say I'm French Canadian, I'm French on both sides of my family.

I have grandparents that went to work in those mills when they were 13 and 14 years old. My mother and father went into those mills when they were 16. And my turn came when I was 17. I grew up in the shadow of those mills really, because not only did they leave an impression on me, an imprint on my life and my thinking, but I literally lived within those shadows; we used to have a little apartment across the street from a shoe shop.

I worked in a mill when I was 17 where we made heels for shoes. I worked with primarily French Canadian people, people who didn't have much education. I didn't have much good education myself at the time. It was non-unionised labor. All the unions had been broken years earlier by runaway shops. It was low pay. It was the kind of money that was difficult to support a family on. We were subjected to speed ups on those machines. They would crank those machines up to however much they wanted, so that you would have to produce a certain number of heels in a specified period of time,

I saw what the future was going to look like for me to work in those mills. And that future became very clear and very glaring when a school chum of mine by the name of Albert Glaude, who worked in the mill across the road, got his arm caught in the machine one day and he was choked to death. Just six months earlier he had been in school with us and the next thing you know he was dead, and those machines killed him. They can kill you very quickly or take a long time to do it.

And I say this because I was very close to my grandparents. My memere, my grandmother, she was like a second mother to me. And my grandfather worked in those mills year after year after year. This was a man I had a great deal of respect for. I used to stand up to his knee, and what I saw happen was I saw his life begin to be devastated by the kind of work that he was subjected to, to the point of where his health was broken down. What happened was a man to whom I once stood only up to his knee, I ended up holding in my arms. I remember one time being called out to the chicken coop where he lived to pick him off the floor because he couldn't stand up after he had fallen down. Working in those woollen mills and shoe shops had that type of eroding effect on a person year after year.

We brought him to the VA hospital because he was a World War I vet. But I found out something else - if you don't have health care from a good union or something, then you are not going to get it from the VA, because they just warehoused him. So we brought him back home to die. And that is what happened to him. He died. And I always thought that those mills had a big part in killing him.

I wanted to escape that destiny. What I saw was a dead end. So at 17 I went to Boston. I started working on the loading docks. And over the years, all my life really, I've done that kind of work. I've worked as a farm laborer and logger. I've worked in factories and mills.

You heard about overt acts from the judge during the instruction. An overt act. That you have to take a step in a conspiracy, you actually have to do something for it to happen. My first overt act in this alleged conspiracy is I was born into a particular class of workers that was severely exploited and subjected to certain kinds of conditions. And that left an imprint on my mind that I was going to have to do something about it, when a factory owner puts more value on his profits than your health and life. I think that those are priorities that need to be changed.

While I was in Boston all I used to read was the sports pages when I rode the subway on the way to work. So I didn't know anything about what was going on over in Southeast Asia. There was a war going on at the time called Vietnam. And the way I grew up was to love my country. Even though I felt like I was being totally exploited in the work that I was doing at the time. I felt I had an obligation to serve my country like my father and my uncles and my grandfather.

I enlisted in the Army in 1967. I went to Vietnam and I served a full tour of duty, 12 months. And what I saw there was another side of war. Not some Hollywood production, not some Rambo type of thing that they feed young guys so they can manipulate them into the military and use them. I saw another side of U.S. foreign policy. Bombings, killings, search and destroy, devastation, poverty, hunger. I was part of a foreign occupation army. I saw human rights violations when I was there, and I saw violations of international law. And I've been to Bien Hoa, I've been to Long Binh, I've been to Xuan Loc, I've been to Bear Cat. I've been around areas, around the Iron Triangle. I've been to Saigon. I've been to base camps like Black Horse. While I was there I did flying in helicopters, so I got a view of the country not only from the ground level but from the air. What I saw was a land that should have been supporting villages and farms and human life that was being totally destroyed. A wasteland. Bomb craters. Nothing but a couple of bushes or a downed helicopter here and there. And I saw the human suffering of the Vietnamese people, and in particular, women and children.

You're going to hear about weapons in this case. I came from an area in Maine where it was natural to grow up with a .22 or .410 shotgun, as I did. The first pistol I ever fired was in Vietnam. There will be a piece of



evidence in here, because the FBI seized it, that shows a picture of me when I was 20 years old with automatic weapons. I'm standing there with an M-16 and an M-60 machine gun in front of a helicopter that says "Gang Busters" on it. Not gangsters, gang busters.

And that's the sort of role that I was asked to fulfill for this government. I was trained to kill. And I was fully armed and sent to Vietnam. You know, there's a lot of vets who came back with post-Vietnam stress disorder. I've worked with those veterans. I didn't suffer any mental illness or syndromes when I came back. I came back enraged by what I saw. To see open and blatant racism by white American soldiers towards Vietnamese people because of the color of their skin or their religion or their culture, their language, was shocking to me. I had never seen anything that devastating. And the Vietnamese are really beautiful people. To see young mothers forced to sell their 13 and 14 year old daughters into prostitution, so that American GI's could prey upon them, that was a shock to me. That was a shock to me, the way I was brought up, the values that I had and supposedly what my function was to be there.

One of the functions that I had there was to do security work. I had to guard Vietnamese who hadn't a security clearance. Mostly it was children, women and older folks, because the men were out there somewhere else. I was to make sure that they didn't go over towards the tents and leave a hand grenade or do some reconnaissance. But every time I saw them move off, what they were looking for was a trash-can or garbage can, so they could take something to bring home to their families. I saw American soldiers die that I didn't even know because I was on the same convoy with them



when we got hit. And I lost a good friend, Brian Griffen. He was 19 years old. He was killed near the end of my tour of duty. I came back on leave and I went to his funeral. This is a kid I used to drink wine with on the corners of Boston. I wore my uniform out of respect for his family to his funeral. But I never wore my uniform with any pride again after that. Not after what I saw in Vietnam. I never saw so many missing arms and legs before we used to say that's the walking wounded. They're more valuable to us than dead Vietnamese because they can be seen every day by the other people as a warning of what happens if you oppose the United States government.

After Vietnam I asked the most seditious question of all - why? Why is this government committing crimes in our name? Why were so many of us from poor and working class backgrounds. Why so many Black and Latino GI's over there told to do the killing and the fighting while the kids who have the money are going to the good schools in the United States? I wasn't coming back to a university. I was going to come back and face the prospect of going back and making some more heels for those shoes.

The blood of innocent people stirred my conscience and I'm going to ask it to move your conscience during this trial. I came back and I saw that the Vietnamese had a will to win, a will to fight. I wanted to do whatever I could to help bring that war to an end. It didn't take any great educated mind to figure out that children are innocent, whether they are Vietnamese or young Black children, or children of workers. But the United States government has never figured that into its policies.

I received an honorable discharge from the Army when I came back and I became politically active with the Southern Student Organizing Committee in Tennessee. Educating people, mobilizing people to oppose the war in Vietnam. We supported the unionization of non-unionized workers. We were involved with organizing support for attempts to unionize workers in meat packing plants throughout the south. If you've ever been in a meat packing plant, you'll understand you work under very unhealthy and unsafe conditions. This is not a union looking for higher wages. This is to get unionized and have the minimum basic protection that a worker should have. I've been in those plants, though I've not worked in them. But I have worked in a tannery and it's very similar. I've had to unload hides off pallets that had maggots eating on the flesh on one side of them. That's what they look like before they are turned into a pair of shoes or a leather jacket.

We made a connection between what was happening in Vietnam and some of the things that were happening in this country. And in particular, the Black liberation struggle at that time. The Civil Rights struggle, the fight of Black people to have decent housing, decent medical care, and jobs. The right to live life to its fullest potential. The right to be free from the fear of being attacked by the Ku Klux Klan or killer cops. We're going to hear a lot more about cops who kill unarmed Black and Latino people in this trial.

I felt as a white working class person having seen some of the racism



in the United States that I saw, that it was my responsibility not to go to Black people and tell them what their agenda is. They were making it clear what they wanted. They wanted freedom. They made it clear in Watts, they made it clear in Detroit. Malcolm X had made it clear. My task was to organize white people to support that struggle. And the union struggle was a multinational struggle of Black and white workers together, so that was part of our agenda.

In 1969 I was in Atlanta at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on the 1st anniversary of the death of Martin Luther King, where we marched in support of civil rights as part of this organization SSOC, while white racists stood on the sidelines and spat on us. These I call early resistance activities. There's going to be a thread that runs through all of the political activity that I've been involved in over the years, and that thread is that every single organization I have been associated with has come under police surveillance and some have come under police attack. When I talk about attack, I am talking about physical attack.

When I was in Tennessee I was set up by a police undercover agent and, ultimately, convicted for selling seven dollars of marijuana. I don't condone drug use, and I worked later as a counselor in drug programs. But this was 1969. I had come back from Vietnam. Seven dollars worth of marijuana was nothing in Vietnam. It was openly used. I was a product of Vietnam. Seven dollars worth of marijuana was used to get me a five year maximum sentence. I had never been in prison before. No felony convictions. But because of my political activity, because I'm a person who doesn't have money to pay for a high-priced lawyer, because I can't influence the government, I was given that five year max. That's the price I had to pay for being a Vietnam veteran opposed to the war and opposed to racism.

Something I found out directly from my experience is that jails and prisons are nothing more than concentration camps for poor people, and people of color in particular. Black people in Tennessee, African-Americans. I saw that. The conditions in the Tennessee jails and prisons were horrible. They were brutalizing. You had to struggle just to keep your humanity from slipping through your fingers as you try and survive from one day to the other. And we were mistreated in jail. I was in a county jail. They were feeding us very poorly, very bad food, and we began to get sick. We got intestinal sicknesses. We had weight losses. We finally couldn't stand it anymore, and we went on a food strike to see if we could improve the conditions. I was asked to speak for the prisoners to present our grievances to the administration.

The way I was rewarded for that was I found myself in the Tennessee State Penitentiary in Nashville classified as an "agitator", which I would call a political prisoner. It's a label that has stuck with me for the 21 years that I've been politically active. I found that prison is nothing more than another kind of concrete and steel ghetto. The men I met in prison were there primarily for economic crimes. Taking because you haven't got a job.

Taking because you do not have enough to provide for your family. Taking because you are part of a racist system that doesn't offer you any opportunity. The conditions were bad. I've seen prisoners cut themselves up. I wrote about this and the government seized these documents. I wrote about what it was like to sit in a cell and watch a 20 year old guy take a piece of glass six inches long and cut himself so he could go to hospital and get something decent to eat. But he made a mistake and cut himself a little too deep. So, he got hurt a lot more than he should have been. He miscalculated.

I write what it's like to read mail to another prisoner because he is illiterate and cannot read letters he's getting from his family. I have to write down for him, "I love you, wife", because he cannot write the words "I love you". He feels it, but he can't write them because he's illiterate.

In those Tennessee prisons we defied Jim Crow. I know some of you know who Jim Crow is: you eat racism, you sleep it, you walk it, they enforce it on you. Forced segregation by race. We fought that. Fought the Ku Klux Klan and we fought the administration. Most of the time you couldn't tell the difference between the two. They profited from dividing Black and white prisoners just like they profited in the union struggles from trying to divide Black and white. They were afraid of that solidarity. Again, the reward for that was banishment. Banishment to isolation cells. Segregation cells, solitary confinement. Eventually they put me in the ultimate solitary confinement, they put me on death row. At that time, they had made part of death row a segregation unit and that was the tightest place they could keep me so that's where they kept me, locked down 23 hours a day. I exercised one hour a day with people who were condemned to die. Most of them were Black and all of them were poor. I never met one who wasn't from a background of poverty. I learned a great deal from these men. Black men who had grown up both in the urban and rural south at that time. That's when I was introduced to the ideas of Malcolm X. Malcolm X said to accelerate and advance the struggle from civil rights to human rights.

There was no work. Very little exercise. Never enough to eat. This had a great impact on my thinking. I was continually kept in isolation cells. I was kept out of contact with other prisoners. But the influence continued. It came to me through the pages of books I was reading: Marx, Lenin, Mao, Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Franz Fanon, Rosa Luxemburg, Emma Goldman, the writings of the Black Panther Party. This is how the struggle for social justice has become my life. I've gone into those factories, those mills, those fields; I've sweat for the boss and know what it's like. I was in the Army. I was in Vietnam. I had to serve this government when they required it. I've been in their jails and prisons. This is how I came to understand what I refer to as the class struggle and class conflict and this is how I became a revolutionary.

The banishment continued when I got out of prison. The only way I could leave prison was on the condition I leave the state of Tennessee. So I returned to my family in Maine where my mother and grandmother were





Rudy Sachs throws his bronze star onto the Capitol steps during 1971 protest by anti-war Vietnam Veterans

living and I slept on a couch there. Started to work 10, 12 hour days. Making concrete blocks. Trying to save up some money to go to school, because I realized I had to get an education.

Then I became a state organizer for Vietnam Veterans Against The War. This was a period of time when the air war in Vietnam was raging. When tens of thousands of Vietnamese civilians were being killed on the orders of people like Nixon and Kissinger. VVAW had documentation about what was going on in Vietnam. We held investigations and we had compiled information from ourselves, because we were there. Pilots, ground soldiers, support troops. We knew what was going on there.

Vietnam Veterans Against The War became a real thorn in the side of the government. I was trying to put into practice what it meant to be a revolutionary. We were organizing marches and demonstrations, speaking, educating, all over northern New England. And I went back to the Togus Veterans Administration Hospital where I had seen my grandfather so many years earlier, because I never forgot it. I went back on a hunch, and sure enough, we found a ward of young Vietnam veterans who were just warehoused there. WAW came under police surveillance. And I am going to return to this theme because it's important. Every political organization I have ever been associated with has come under police surveillance, and ultimately attacked.

When the war wound down, I began to work with other organizations that did work primarily with prisoners, ex-prisoners and their families. One of these organizations was called SCAR. With SCAR I was involved in putting together what we call survival programs: survival pending significant social changes that would meet the needs of the people who suffer most from class and racist oppression. It was an adaption of what the Black Panther Party was doing at the time. Our motto was: serve the people. And our programs were always free to the people we served. SCAR is an organization that I worked with at the time this alleged conspiracy began. I was directly involved in setting up literacy programs in several county jails in southern Maine at the time, so we could teach prisoners how to read and write. And GED programs, so they could get their high school diplomas. I was involved in drug counseling. And we set up a prisoners' union at the state prison. We provided free transportation to prison for families and friends of prisoners because they didn't have much money. We were involved in getting jobs for people. We were involved in getting temporary housing for

people. We were involved in day care for children. We put out our own paper. We did support work for political prisoners. We monitored cases of police brutality in the community in which we lived.

There are two things about SCAR's work at that time that I think casts a different light on the organization than the government's witness is going to. We worked in a neighborhood coalition with other groups. We worked with people on welfare; we worked with tenants' rights people. I was involved in setting up two programs that came out of this coalition. We went to people and we said what can we do for you, what do you need? One of the things they said was our kids and young people and sometimes older people are being imprisoned and they can't get out because they don't have the hundred dollars bail or two hundreds bail. So we organized what we called the Portland Community Bail Fund. Portland was the name of the community I lived in. That bail fund is still in existence today, 15 years later.

The other thing that I was involved with was kids in the projects. The kids were drinking a lot, doing drugs, and there was a problem with the cops. Mothers said the kids were losing respect for them. Primarily, women were raising these kids in the projects. They came to SCAR for help. At the time I was teaching free karate classes at the university to people in the community. So I went to the Bayside Projects and the Kennedy Park Projects and started a karate program for young kids, because I found out through my years of practice that martial arts serve to instill a certain measure of self-respect and self-discipline in a person. And if you have respect for yourself, then you're going to respect your elders, you are going to respect the people in your neighborhood. That's what a revolutionary does if a revolutionary loves the people. I try to put that into practice.

In 1974 I became involved in opening up the Red Star North Bookstore, which was loosely associated with SCAR. You are going to see evidence about this bookstore. You are going to see a photograph of the bookstore and myself. It isn't hard for the government to get photographs. The store was under police surveillance all the time. We sold books on labor history, Black history, revolution, feminism. We had a free books for prisoners program. We mailed books free to prisoners who requested it. We maintained correspondence with prisoners. As I said, the bookstore was under surveillance. If you're going to oppose this government on any level, you're going to have to live with the fact that the police are going to be breathing down your neck and listening to your telephone.

But it didn't stay at that level. It accelerated and it intensified. I became aware of the existence of a police death squad, a police assassination squad that had been formed in the Portland Police Department. I had several sources of information for that: 1) it was on the street that myself and my comrade Tom Manning were to be targeted, along with other ex-prisoners by this assassination team; 2) I was told this by a guy named Stevie Poullen, who, it would be revealed at city council hearings, was also on that list. Stevie Poullen's not coming in to talk about it because he got a .357 in his



head. Some people say he put it there. Other people speculated that cops put it there; 3) there were city wide hearings held in City Hall to investigate the allegations of a death squad. SCAR demonstrated at City Hall to bring as much public attention as we could to what was happening. At that demonstration a woman named Linda Coleman came up to me and introduced herself. It was the first time in my life I had seen her. She's a government witness now.

We were looking to see if we could find justice. What we got was a whitewash and a cover-up. A lot of cops were implicated at those hearings and ultimately only one was indicted for solicitation to murder, Another one of the cops who was involved in this was named Bertrand Surphes. This becomes important in terms of the bookstore, because the bookstore came under attack. The bookstore became a focus for the cops to zero in on. Then there was an incident where one of the workers in the bookstore was attacked by two men who slipped in the door. She was brutally beaten and she was raped. She told me it was the police. It was hard for me to fathom it could be anybody else. Because they're parked across the street. They were always watching us.

There were other incidents. The bookstore was ransacked. Books were destroyed. Posters were ripped up. The little money that was there was taken. There were death threats, both on the phone at SCAR and through mailings that contained Ku Klux Klan and Nazi slogans. There were arrests. A squad of police officers came burrowing through the front door one day, and who should be in front of the squad and the arresting officer but Bertrand Surphes, who had been implicated in the death squad. Why was I arrested? Because after searching the bookstore, they say they found a can of beer that had its top open in the back room. Naturally, the judge threw that out. That was a bogus arrest to come in and hassle us and close the store and threaten us.

I took this as a real serious threat, not only to our political work but to our lives. I started to carry a gun. Now I'm in a bad situation. I'm a convicted felon. I sold seven dollars of marijuana, so a gun is going to get me ten years in a federal penitentiary. But I got a choice between that or getting one of these cop's bullets in my head. I didn't think it was a choice so I started to carry a gun. I always thought it was a very wise move. Remember, this is the early 1970s. There's a larger framework involved.

I became familiar with COINTELPRO - counterintelligence programs of the FBI. The target of the COINTELPRO programs were primarily organizations and individuals that worked for social change and opposed government policy. Their tactics included everything from harassment, surveillance and wiretaps to assassinations. One of the earliest targets was Martin Luther King. The government has always targeted any leadership that's ever risen up either in the civil rights struggle involving Black people or human rights struggle. Over 40 members of the Black Panther Party were killed during this period of COINTELPRO activities. Dozens of Indian



activists were murdered. Vietnam Veterans Against The War was a COINTELPRO target as was the Puerto Rican Independence Movement.

This was the climate of the time. I did not want to remain vulnerable to police attack, their agents, their provocateurs. So I made a decision that I was going to continue my work away from the eyes and ears of the government. I call that going underground. Sometimes people call it clandestine. Of course I had to take these police attacks into consideration. But I will tell you, I'll be totally up front about it, it merely accelerated what I had wanted to do for a period of time. I ultimately would have gone underground.

The reason that I went under was because I wanted to contribute to building a revolutionary resistance movement in this country that has the ability to defend itself at any stage of its development, at any stage of history, regardless of what particular activity it is engaged in at the time. You cannot expose all the organizations of a political movement to the government. Some of them have to be away from its eyes and ears. I wanted to help build a movement that would grow and sustain itself. A movement is always subject to attack at any point in time. And I wanted to help build something that could sustain any attack.

I freely admit to being part of a revolutionary movement. The government cannot tolerate serious opposition to its own criminal policies, so they do what the prosecution are trying to do here. They want to criminalize my life, my values, and the organizations that they allege I've been part of. They begin to do this in the indictment by talking about "manner and means". Use of fictitious identification, renting houses with names other than your own, using public telephones to communicate, private mailboxes. The possession of weapons. Practicing with weapons. Monitoring police activities. If you look at the context in which things are done, I think that in this case you are going to find out this is not criminal activity. You know, when I went to Vietnam I was 20 years old, I couldn't vote and I could not have a legal drink. So I did what a lot of other GI's did. I had a fake ID, so I could have a beer and celebrate the idea that I might get killed in another year to defend this system.

More to the point, if you want to stay alive and survive, you have to utilize these methods. In Nazi Germany if they hadn't had secret meetings, I'm talking about Jews, labor leaders, communists, gay people, everybody who the Nazis went after, if they hadn't used false passports, if they didn't carry a gun now and then, do you think more would have gotten killed? When the Nazis spread their fascism into France and you had a French government that collaborated with the Nazis, how far do you think the resistance would have got, if they had not utilized these types of methods? It had a hard enough time as it was.

And the same could be said for South Africa today that murders and tortures its opponents. They want you to carry a pass in South Africa today. So you are going to have to find something else if you don't want to end up

in one of those South African prisons. Or the sanctuary movement today, which utilizes churches to move refugees through the country from Central America, refugees from wars that the United States is responsible for creating. Think for a minute about a woman named Harriet Tubman, who used to come through Springfield up to Amherst and into Canada. She carried a gun and she used a name other than her own and she used so-called safe houses. That is what the underground railroad was. How many of those slaves do you think would have made it if she hadn't done that? Part of what they were fleeing from was the Fugitive Slave Act. It was the law at the time.

I would like to digress for a minute and tell you why I'm choosing to defend myself. I was underground for ten years. It's not easy for me to stand here before you now and speak in what is essentially a public forum. What I'm simply trying to do is to add my voice to that of millions of others who cry freedom from South Africa to Central America to the south Bronx in New York. They don't have much choice about it, and I don't have much choice. I'd rather not be here. But since I am, I want to defend myself and I want to defend the issues that I think are important. And the important issue here is the issue of human rights. I see that as a central part of this.

The prosecutor mentioned one of his snitch witnesses comes from Harvard University, and of course the prosecutor went to the same school. I can tell you that I never went to any prestigious law school. He has indicated that he is going to bring a computer in here to put on his table. You will not see any computer over there on my table. And I don't have a squad of FBI agents running my paperwork around for me. I do all my preparation from a prison cell. I'm one of over a hundred political prisoners in the United States which the United States refuses to recognize.

The judge has said I don't have to ask questions, I don't have to testify, I don't have to cross-examine. But I do want to defend myself and I do want to participate in certain parts of this trial. What he didn't tell you is that he decides what it is I can do. I have a defense, but you are not necessarily going to hear it or see it. He makes that decision. That's the power he has. But if you don't hear it, it's not that I haven't tried.

You will see me angry in this trial. That anger will never be directed towards you. My anger is reserved for the government and some of the agents and witnesses who they're going to bring in here.

Now, over the years, after Vietnam, I felt I needed to engage in a self-education project. You will see a lot of material that was seized by the FBI. They seized everything in the house, including my kids' report cards, and a copy of the Bill of Rights. I monitored and collected a lot of data, research, fiscal data, articles documenting human rights violations in South Africa, Central America, human rights violations by this government. I collected information on military contractors; who they are selling their weapons to and how much they are getting for it, I tried to document every incident I could find where Black and Latino people were murdered by the police.



And if I stood here now and started giving you each one of those names, I would still be standing here next week. I kept a file on the numbers of homeless and hungry and the numbers of unemployed. And there was a special notebook which I kept on prisons, documenting the guard murders of prisoners and, in particular, political prisoners. I documented civil rights violations and violations of international law.

The judge has said that you are triers of facts and I think you should look at the facts. But I'm going to ask you to look for something else. I'm going to ask you to look for the truth. Over the years, directly and indirectly, I have become aware that the United States government and some of the corporations headquartered in this country have been engaged in serious violations of international law, what are referred to as crimes against humanity and war crimes. The government has referred to communiqués that will come into evidence. The evidence is going to show that a lot of these bombings were done in support of freedom in South Africa. And that no other government in today's modern world is as close to being like Nazi Germany as the government of racist South Africa.

South Africa has a system called apartheid. Apartheid means hate Black people; segregate Black people. The United Nations has condemned apartheid as a crime against humanity. The closest ally to racist South Africa in this world is the United States government. The United Nations has condemned the collaboration of the U.S., including U.S. corporations, with racist South Africa. There's a saying I once heard: "The blood of oppression in South Africa runs as deep as the mines". Because we know who works in the mines in South Africa, who mines the gold and diamonds - Black people. They do it for next to nothing. They do it for starvation wages. Because they've had their land stolen from them. Black people are 80% of the population and they don't even have the right to vote.

There was an action carried out by the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit in 1976 against Union Carbide. It was right after the Soweto Uprising in South Africa in which 1,000 or more Black people, mainly women and children, were gunned down by South African troops. It started off as a student demonstration. People demanding to preserve their language and culture were shot in the back by the South African troops. The very first to be killed was Hector Peterson, a young African boy. He was 14 years old. Why were they gunned down? Because they were all in the streets of Soweto, a Black township, with their fists in the air shouting "Amandla Amandla" - power that brings freedom. They want their country back. They want their land back. And they want their rights.

The Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit attacked the property of the Union Carbide Corporation while the U.S. government was collaborating with the South African police and troops to kill 1,000 Black people. I'm here to support the liberation struggle in South Africa; these prosecutors are here to defend the interests of the United States government in South Africa. The United Freedom Front also paid a visit to the South African Airways

office, a front for an office of the South African government in New York City. They did it there after there was a massacre in Lesotho, next to South Africa, where South African troops had gone in and gunned down Black activists. That's called a massacre. We're going to learn in this trial what the word massacre means.

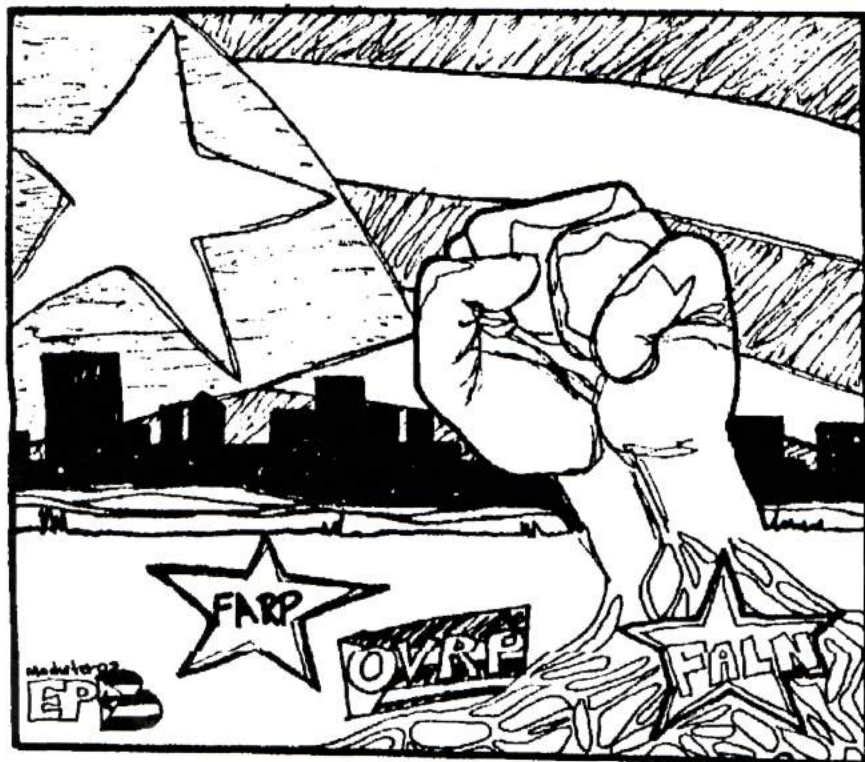
American corporations are the legs upon which the racist system in South Africa walks. Troops in South Africa ride in General Motors trucks that are fuelled by Mobil Oil Corporation. So do the entire police and military system. In South Africa, those prisons, that pass system, all of that is computerized by corporations like IBM. The blood of innocent people must stir your conscience. I think that you ought to ask yourself a question throughout this trial, and that is: who are the real criminals? Those who support the racist system in South Africa or those who are opposed to it?

I believe that the evidence will show that there is a war in Central America and that it is a U.S. sponsored war. This trial's going to have a lot to do with bombings. The United Freedom Front took responsibility for bombings of U.S. military contractors and facilities. The evidence is going to show the UFF objected to the United States shipping bombs and armaments to the government of El Salvador which uses them to slaughter its own people. One of these particular bombs is a 750 pound fragmentation bomb. The prosecutor referred to 600 pounds of dynamite. This is one bomb that weighs 750 pounds. It's dropped by an A-37 Dragon Jet made by General Electric. That was also used in Vietnam. They're anti-personnel bombs. They explode before they hit the ground. That's not designed to destroy property as much as it's designed to kill people. And while we're standing here, there is a corporation up in Burlington, Vermont - General Electric - that is making machine guns that's going on this aircraft. The guns that the peasants in El Salvador refer to as flying death squads. The issue of state terrorism is going to be a central issue that comes up during this trial.

A lot of SM/JJ bombings were done in support of Puerto Rican independence and the release of Puerto Rican political prisoners. All national struggles in which people are trying to be free are close to my heart, but the struggle for Puerto Rico to be free is especially close to me. I have three young girls and I used to tell them bedtime stories about Puerto Rican patriots like Lolita Lebron and her companeros who spent a quarter of a century in U.S. prisons because they dared to take the struggle for a free Puerto Rico to the heart of the beast, right here in the United States. Half of the Puerto Rican population have been forced by economic conditions to migrate to this country. The American flag flies over Puerto Rico. While you think it may represent freedom here, it does not represent freedom to the vast majority of Puerto Rican people,

The United States invaded Puerto Rico 90 years ago and it has been militarily occupied since then. There are bases all over the nation of Puerto Rico. The United Nations has ruled that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States and that colonialism is illegal under international law. I believe





that it is inhumane by any standard to subject another country or another people to what you want to do. The United Nations has ruled that Puerto Rico is being held illegally, illegally occupied, therefore it has the right to resist that occupation, and I support that. You are going to see evidence in this trial about the police murders of unarmed Puerto Rican men right here in Springfield. That is something the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit felt was necessary to respond to. You will see evidence of the abusive treatment of Puerto Rican political prisoners held in the United States.

Like me you probably hold high value and respect for the principles on which the American Revolution was founded, the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. But as I look back at those documents and what they represent, I ask myself, I do not remember anybody conferring on this government or its military or police apparatus the right to engage in violations of human rights in the name of the American people. When I went to school as a kid I would do the pledge of allegiance all the time. But, based on my experience since then, I don't feel like I owe any blind allegiance to a system that is going to perpetuate this kind of suffering of people throughout the world, including here within the United States. I mentioned earlier that the question of killer cops is going to be an important issue in this trial. When officers of the New York City Police Department beat to death a young Black community artist named Michael Stewart, the United Freedom

Front responded by supporting the Black communities in their struggle to stop killer cops.

There's little difference between a lynching by the KKK and a police officer who puts a bullet in the head of a young Black man, and it happens time and time again. And lest we think the Klan is not active, I expect that we're going to have a close look at the New York Police Department during this trial. I think what you are going to see is the largest Ku Klux Klan.

The sedition law and the RICO law was addressed earlier and I now want to address them briefly. Sedition laws in general have always been designed to break what has been a tradition of resistance and political activity in this country, whether it was Native American people resisting the theft of their land or slaves trying to be free, or union leaders or anti-war activists. And this specific sedition law, seditious conspiracy, has been almost exclusively used against Puerto Rican Independenistas, that is, advocates for a free and independent Puerto Rico. Now the government has expanded its use to try and target those who support Puerto Rican independence. You are going to see very clearly that I support Puerto Rican independence with all my heart. And I don't support it idly, I support it actively, I participate in the struggle.

The government wants you to believe that three people are going to conspire to overthrow the most powerful government on the face of the earth. Or 8 people as the original indictment says. Or 80 or 800 for that matter. That is a fabrication. That goes against my political thinking. Because I don't think there's going to be significant social change in this country unless a lot of people participate and make it happen. That is what self-determination is all about.

They're spending over \$10,000,000 on this trial to try to convince people that a 125 year sedition statute is going to keep the United States from sinking. What they are really looking for with their \$10,000,000 is a government show trial. A propaganda trial. Sort of a version of what they used to have years ago where you take a dissident and you put him in a wooden stock and try to humiliate him, denigrate him, criminalize him. This is what they want to use the prosecution of myself and others for. As a warning to other political dissidents, to organizers, to revolutionaries. Against those who challenge a government conducting their bloody business as usual.

They want to see to it that I spend the rest of my life in prison. They want to make me bleed. One of the ways they do that is they go not just after me, but they go after everybody whom I'm associated with - friends, family, supporters. I've had friends subpoenaed before a grand jury that refused to testify; refused to give up information. They have been jailed. That's called political internment, because you're jailed without a trial.

I was arrested in November 1984. Since I've been arrested, I've been beaten and I've been stun gunned. A stun gun is like an electric cattle prod. I was arrested with my wife and our three children, who were 4, 6 and 8 at the time. Government agents attempted to bribe my eight-year-old daughter



at the time. She wouldn't take a bribe. So they put her in a room with FBI agents and state police and they threatened her. There was a time when these agents sitting here and their colleagues were hanging from trees in the cemetery when my grandma died, because they thought that they could pick up on my whereabouts, because they think that my family is going to turn me in. I don't come from that kind of people. We don't turn each other in. We do not turn over for this government.

The treatment of the children at the time of our arrest, and particularly the children of Thomas and Carol Manning, who were grabbed and held for two months incommunicado, separate from their family members who pleaded to have them released and ultimately they were released after widespread attention was brought on the case and after a hunger strike. What I'm getting at is the abuses that the government is prepared to carry out in an attempt to not only convict me and keep me in prison, but also to take that pound of flesh and hurt everybody that I'm associated with.

In June of 1984 it became public knowledge of the existence of a task force called BosLuc. You remember I said my middle name is Luc. Bos, B O S, Boston, Luc, LUC, my middle name. I was the target. This task force existed before June of 1984, but it became public knowledge in June of 1984. It had to because they put a bullet in the head of a kid named Ralph Richards. I read about it in the newspaper. How this kid had his hands up and he got shot in the head by the BosLuc agents. I felt that bullet had my name on it.

There's another reason for this prosecution and what the government is doing that sheds some light on their intent. Not only do they want to keep me in prison, but they want to put my wife in prison. If you listened to the prosecution earlier, you heard them characterize our marriage and our love for each other as if it were some kind of criminal enterprise. You know I'm separated from my three young daughters by prison walls and my wife brings them in to visit me, but the government isn't going to be satisfied until those three kids are orphans. That's the nature and extent of the punishment that they want to put out to anyone who even thinks of challenging this government's policies, particularly where I am so outspoken about it. It's hard to believe that those government prosecutors are going to build their careers on the backs of political prisoners and children who are left without their parents. But that's what they're doing.

I want to just briefly address the issue of the RICO charges. Racketeering Influenced Corrupt Organizations. I can't tell you how insulted I am that these prosecutors charge me with being a racketeer. That law was passed in the 1970s and it was specifically passed to be used against real gangsters and real racketeers. Racketeering Influenced and Corrupt Organizations I do not believe has the word revolutionary in it, or political dissident. They're trying to bend the law is what they're trying to do. You cannot be a revolutionary and be a racketeer. It's a contradiction. It is either one or the other. You cannot support freedom struggles in South Africa or



Central America or the Black nation within this country from the foundation of a criminal enterprise. It can't be done. History shows that.

I'm neither profit oriented nor drug oriented. In 21 years of political activity I've never done anything for personal gain or profit. Nothing. That has never been part of my motivation or intent. The government wants to charge that bombing the office of the South African government is an act of racketeering? A bombing that was done in response to a massacre in South Africa and to support the struggle for freedom there. This is an act of racketeering? No, it's an expression of support for freedom. It is that simple. If we could have Nelson Mandela here today, or Winnie Mandela, would they think attacking an office of the racist government of South Africa is an act of racketeering?

The government stood up for 45 minutes essentially saying nothing more than that I'm a criminal and a racketeer and part of a criminal enterprise. That's not true, and I want to refute it and I want to put as much evidence in as I can to refute it. I want to participate in certain parts of this trial to refute it. If you want to see a corrupt and criminal enterprise let's take a good look at the highest levels of the United States government and what some of these military contractors are doing. Then we'll see what real corruption and criminality looks like.

These prosecutors do not represent the American people. They represent the government. And, since Vietnam, I have always made an important distinction between the two. I hope that you will. They're here to present certain interests and I'm here to defend certain issues. I began this by talking about children. The children I began talking about were my own grandparents. They were merely children when they had to go to work in those mills and shoe factories. My grandfather was 13 years old. That and my own experience I've outlined to you have left a deep imprint on me. And it does not leave me with any criminal intent or a criminal mind. It leaves me with the heart of a revolutionary, somebody who's committed to social justice. My wife and I have a marriage. We don't have a criminal enterprise. I love her very much. We have three daughters. My oldest daughter is going to be 13 the day after tomorrow. We named each of our kids after their grandmothers, one of whom is sitting here now, and one after their great grandmother. Because we are proud of our working class roots and we're proud of our families.

I will remember the children of Vietnam, the suffering of those children who I saw there. But I also remember the beauty of their



smiles. And I never have lost sight of what human potential there is in people. This is at the heart of what motivates me - my intent, my purpose, my goals, my values, this is where it's at. Its my commitment. This is what the government fears. That I didn't go back to that mill to make those shoe heels, that I took another course with my life. I have a commitment to a future that holds the human potential of poor and working class people as a great asset to be developed. A commitment to a future in which no child will ever have to suffer from racism,' poverty or war. A future where justice brings peace for our children and generations to come.

Raymond Luc Levasseur  
January 10, 1989  
United States Courthouse  
Springfield, Massachusetts



# Sedition Trial Closing Statement

**“There’s a ruling class and there’s the rest of us...”**

United States of America vs. Raymond Luc Levasseur, Thomas Manning, Carol Soucier-Manning, Patricia Gros, Richard Williams, Jaan Laaman, Barbara Curzi, Kazi Toure.

Count One: 18 U.S.C. 1962 (d) Racketeering Conspiracy (RICO)

Count Two: 18 U.S.C. 1962 (c) - Participation in a Racketeering Enterprise (RICO)

Count Three: 18 U.S.C. Seditious Conspiracy

\*Seditious Conspiracy 18 U.S.C. / 2384

*The indictment states: “From in or about 1974 to the date of this indictment [May 1986], at various locations in the District of Massachusetts and elsewhere, the defendants did knowingly, willfully and unlawfully conspire, combine and agree with each other and with persons known and unknown to the Grand Jury to overthrow, put down and destroy by force the government of the United States, and to oppose by force the authority thereof, and by force to prevent, hinder and delay the execution of the laws of the United States.”*

My first overt act in these conspiracies the government says I’m part of, was being born into a particular class of exploited workers. What I refer to as the laboring class. I can trace my anger back that far. Back to the insufficient wages and working conditions, which I experienced.

The prosecutor was just talking about “Autobiography For My Daughter” which I wrote in 1976. I encourage you to read it in its entirety. I didn’t write it for the FBI who seized it. I didn’t write it to be used in evidence at trial 14 years later. I wrote it for my daughter.

What’s in “Autobiography For My Daughter” is what was in my mind and it’s all of me. Some of it isn’t very pretty, but my life hasn’t always been very pretty.

That autobiography and other writings such as “Seize The Time”, writings about Attica [prison uprising and massacre, September 9-13, 1971], writings to Patricia, are the writings of a worker. They are the writings of a revolutionary. They are not the writings of a racketeer.

The government alleges this conspiracy begins sometime in 1974. I don’t know when in 1974 because they never made that clear. Maybe it was when I brought a gun into the Red Star North bookstore and showed people how to use it. When a cop tries to kill you, you should defend yourself.



I say this conspiracy goes back much farther then that. By way of illustration let me say this. There was a time when I was in a prison cell in the Tennessee State penitentiary. I was feeling isolated and God awful lonely. It was like bearing a continuous pain. If you read my writings you'll see that.

In that prison cell I met two men. Their names are Sacco and Vanzetti. They were Italian immigrants to the United States. They were working men and they were radicals. They were executed in Massachusetts in 1927 in the wake of a "red scare" in which "foreigners" and those in radical political organizations were persecuted. I met them in the pages of a book on the labor movement.

I would like to read to you a brief excerpt of something I read in that cell back in 1970. This is from an item in evidence. It's called, "The Story of George Jackson". If you look here you will see a picture of Sacco and Vanzetti. These are the words I read back then - "The last speech to court by Bartolomeo Vanzetti."

"If it had not been for these things I might have lived out my life talking at street corners to scorning men. I might have died, unmarked, unknown, a failure. Now we are not a failure. This is our career and our triumph. Never in our full life could we hope to do such work for tolerance, for justice, for man's understanding of man as now we do by accident. Our words, our lives our pains - nothing! The taking of our lives - lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler - all! That last moment belongs to us - that agony is our triumph."

When I first read this, "the lives of a good shoemaker and a poor fish peddler", I started to think, I'm part of this laboring class too. I worked in the mill making shoe heels. I had worked as a farm worker. I had worked on the fish pier. Then I thought, this is part of my history. This is the real conspiracy. The real history of our people. And the isolation and the loneliness eased up a bit.

"The Story of George Jackson" [Black Panther murdered in prison August 21, 1971] is a children's book. I made it for my kids. It was seized by the FBI. It's part of the material they use to bring prosecution for seditious conspiracy and racketeering. I wrote it. If you want to look inside the mind of who the government says is a racketeer, you should look at all this material.

Like here, a picture of 13-year-old Hector Pieterse who was the first Black child to be killed in the Soweto [South Africa] uprisings in 1976.

The conspiracy is a long one. I have another word for conspiracy. I call it resistance. Go back to the Native Americans. They were the first to resist. They didn't want to die. They didn't want to be killed by the white man. The Native American people were the first victims of North American terrorism. The government maintains, as do history books, that Native American people were the first seditious conspirators.

It influenced me enough to put it in a child's book with pictures of Native Americans and to put in my handwriting, "Native Americans the

first to resist,” and to show pictures of people who have resisted throughout our history, including pictures of George Jackson, Joe Hill, Fred Hampton, Lolita Lebron. People who have been killed and imprisoned.

My co-conspirators: Emma Goldman, Rosa Parks, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, and those who fight for Puerto Rican Independence. Some were charged with sedition. Some paid for their commitment with their lives.

There are usually two sides to everything. Had I sided with the rich and powerful I probably wouldn't be here today. I would have been commended and awarded like I was when I was in Vietnam. Got my little commendations that don't mean anything anymore.

But the war changed me. My values remained the same but my outlook changed. You can't participate in an illegal and immoral war and it not have some impact on a young person. We were turning Vietnam into a massive graveyard. There are emotional scars to bear from an experience like that. There's much to learn.

Returning stateside I began to work with the Southern Student Organizing Committee [southern based student led radical group]. I brought someone in to testify about that. She got about three sentences in and the judge told her to leave. Apparently they don't think a person's state of mind goes back to Vietnam or that it effects a person's thinking. Or what I did with my life.

I began to see issues of poverty, racism, workers' rights and war as being interrelated. I will tell you now that I was a soldier at war in Vietnam and I'm a soldier still at war. I took sides then and I'm taking sides now.

I'm not a sunshine soldier. You know, those who only want to soldier when the weather is good. Like our illustrious Vice President Quayle, who's a war hawk during the Vietnam years but got himself in one of those National Guard units so he don't have to go over there; because he had the money and he's in the university and he's going to be a lawyer.

The government makes policies that directly affect peoples lives. They have to be held accountable for those policies.

The way I see it, there's a ruling class and there's the rest of us. Before I became political and started reading and organizing I used to call the ruling class, the "bossman". That's what we called him on the shop floor. Like Jimmy Reed said in that old blues song, "big bossman, he's just tall, that's all."

The ruling class and the rest of us, and among the rest of us there's some that got it all right, they got it pretty good. But there's a whole lot that ain't got it so good. Or we ain't got nothing at all. And those of us who don't have anything, we don't have anything in common with the ruling class.

I have much more in common with a peasant or a laborer in El Salvador than I do with Ronald Reagan or George Bush or Rockefeller or DuPont. Each laborer has a common bond with others who labor and that bond exists beyond any individual country. It is an international bond.

The way I see it the property of the wealthy is not worth the price of



one laborer's life. Not on the factory floor, not on the farm, and not in the fields of any imperialist war. My understanding of class struggle and class conflict comes from my own life experiences. I've worked jobs from can't see in the morning until you can't see at night. Maybe some of you have. I didn't get paid for it too good either.

I've been to their wars and I've been to their prisons. I know that it takes as much courage to pick up a lunch pail and work in a sweatshop to feed your children as it does to pick up a gun. I know that because I have done both.

If the government wants to consider me a traitor, then so be it. But I'd rather be considered a traitor to my country than to my class. That's honestly how I feel. I didn't feel that way in 1967 when I went to Vietnam, but that's how I've felt for a long time. I feel that way today.

I don't pay a blind allegiance to a system that kills my own people, whether they're killing them in El Salvador or the streets of New York City; whether they're killing them with lynch mobs, police bullets, asbestos poisoning or pesticides. My commitment is to my class and those who are oppressed.

Your presence here is an important reason why I decided to participate in this trial. I still retain a strong belief in the humanity of people, in the basic goodness, which exists in most people and in your sense of justice.

But I have no faith in the criminal justice system. None. Judges? Forget it. Prosecutors? Forget it. I don't have any faith in them. Prison administrators? I don't have any faith in anybody who's going to beat me on the head. FBI agents and the police? None.

Any faith I have in any part of this process at this point lies with you people. I've seen this system destroy too many of its victims. I've seen it hurt, abuse, discard, exploit and kill. And I've seen it with these eyes. Sometimes people told me certain things and sometimes I read things, but everything I just said I have seen with my own eyes.

I could have sat out this trial in a prison cell, and I almost did that. I'm in prison anyway. But the more I thought about it the more incensed I became with the government's scheme of trying to criminalize my life with the label of racketeer and corruption.

I asked myself what terrible crimes has this government committed that they fear the voice of one man? What terrible crimes is this government trying to hide that they fear the wrath of the United Freedom Front?

Is it that the government tries to hide the existence of political prisoners in this country because we challenge the image that the U.S. is a truly democratic and humane society?

Is it that with the use of racketeering and corruption charges against political activists and revolutionaries the government tries to hide its own record of human rights abuses and atrocities?

So, when faced with trial I decided to do what I've done for over 20 years. Organize. To alert people in our communities and movements to the

danger of this type of prosecution. To build support and to raise political and human rights issues presented by a trial of this nature, and this is a political trial.

I want to add my voice to those of all people who suffer and die because of this government's foreign and domestic policies. I am not about to let this government take the issue of human rights and denigrate it to an issue of criminality in this trial.

As long as this government is responsible for committing crimes against humanity and war crimes, I'm going to organize and fight them until I don't have any breath left in this life.

They can't inflict enough pain on me or bury me deep enough in their penitentiary cells that I won't raise my voice or my fist in defiance.

You may recall in my opening I said I would try to present a defense. I would try to present both material evidence and testimony of witnesses. The government's position is a defendant has no right to present witnesses. I found out during the trial, this is true. It's more like a privilege and the judge decided how much of this privilege you're going to get.

I brought boxes of material and documents in this trial and offered them into evidence. Material was admitted into evidence. Just a fraction. What did come in was admitted with limitation rulings by the judge which puts a severe restriction on how I can use it, how I can present it to you.

The government didn't have this problem. They got 1,500 pieces of evidence in and they presented over 200 witnesses, most of them police; but you never saw most of the witnesses proposed by the defense. Witnesses who could have testified about the colonization of Puerto Rico, counter-intelligence programs of the FBI, clandestinely, the applicability of international law.

Freedom of speech as it exists in this country gets curtailed at the courthouse door. The witnesses I tried to present disappeared. You never saw them. You never heard them.

The judge says you are triers of the facts, but his orders severely restrict me and the defense from being able to present you with all of the relevant facts.

Anyway, here I am. Each day I've been brought to court in 10 pounds of chains and leg irons to participate in this trial. I've had to endure the indignities of hundreds of strip searches.

The charges that I am a racketeer are a lie. What I call the bright shining lie of government hypocrisy and deceit. I'm not a drug dealer. I'm not an arsonist for hire. I'm not a murderer. I don't engage in extortion. I don't run gambling houses and I don't infiltrate legitimate businesses to corrupt them. That's not me. I've never done anything for my own personal gain or profit in the 21 years I've been politically active. Nothing.

The government knows this. What's important to them and their own propaganda is a conviction of activists and revolutionaries under the RICO laws. They want to discredit us. They want to criminalize. They want to



criminalize those who present a serious opposition to them and their policies. And they want to scare the hell out of a lot of other people.

We know what they did to the Black Panther Party. We know what they did to the anti-war movement. We know what they did to the Puerto Rican Independence movement, and we know what they did to Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

The government's position is you don't even have to step out there into the real world to be convicted of a racketeering conspiracy. You don't have to make a withdrawal from a bank or make an improvised explosive device or put some fire on the police. Just be a member of an organization the government wants to destroy. Be part of an agreement, nod your head. Say "yes".

Sedition is a law which has always been used to target the political opposition in this country and Puerto Rico, which is a different country. It's own country.

You'll be told that an overt act in sedition is anything done to further seditious conspiracy. What's that supposed to be? Obtaining a weapon? Buying a box of ammunition? Buying a pair of rubber gloves? Living in a safe house? Getting a piece of identification in a name other than your own, which at least one of you has done sometime in your life.

That's one reason I see so many people in court today. I don't see any empty seats. I see a number of people from various political organizations because they want to know if they're going to be next to be prosecuted under the sedition law. There always has been a next in the history of this country.

I'm not a criminal. I don't break into people's homes. I don't steal their paychecks. I live by the principle, "Do not take a single needle or piece of thread from the masses." I don't rape and pillage. I don't live my life on the backs of those I'm committed to defend.

I'm a revolutionary and everything that means. One thing it means, as Che Guevara said, "it takes great love to be a revolutionary."

In 1975, in a letter I wrote to Patricia, which the FBI seized and is in evidence, I said, "My love is for the oppressed, Black, Brown, Native American, poor whites, rising women. With me it's the mill workers, shoe shop workers, cleaning women, the millions of under and unemployed laborers whose hands earn their living when they can get it. Woodsmen, those on welfare, in the prison camps, those sleeping in the parks, on the waterfront, burned out, farm workers, laundry workers, food packers."

In this letter I also referred to another of Che's statements: "People without hatred cannot vanquish a brutal enemy."

Am I angry? Yes, I am. Can I hate? Yes, I can. I hate poverty and racism and I hate injustice and I'll do whatever has to be done to make some contribution to doing something about it.

I hate those who inflict violence and fear and hunger on the people

I love. And it makes no difference whether the victims are peasants in El Salvador or migrant workers in California.

I don't forget. I can't forget. I can't forget about Comrade George Jackson and I can't forget the Attica Brothers. Atrocities and massacres. And Little Bobby Forsythe who was gassed to death in his prison cell by CN gas which is outlawed under the Geneva Convention. Prison authorities in this country use it and extra stocks are sent to the Israelis to use against the Palestinians.

You remember when we moved from the old courtroom to this [larger] courtroom? And you're sitting right here [in the jury box] and there was the clock right there [on the wall] and you were looking at it. You expected to take a break at a certain time. You looked at your watches and they were telling you the truth, what time it was. You saw the clock was wrong and you brought it the judge's attention. The judge said don't pay any attention to the clock, concentrate on the testimony.

Don't look at the clock, right? It's staring you right in the face. You know that it's wrong. You looked beyond the clock for the truth of the matter and you went to resources you have available to do that. In this case it was your own watches and you were right. I'm going to ask you to look for the truth in this case. To look beyond the limitations.

This is little Bobby Forsythe's death certificate. It tells you right on here that he was gassed to death in his cell with CN gas. I carried his death certificate around with me since 1974 when I was originally writing to the brothers at McAllister penitentiary where this happened. It was seized by the FBI from my home. I can't forget, it's not that easy.

People say I don't smile enough, but they don't know the inside of me. I've been hurt too many times and I've seen too many others hurt. I don't feel much compassion for the pigs who got the jack boot on the back of our necks. That's a term I use, "pigs". That's what I call people who kill us and brutalize us. When they stop killing us and brutalizing us, then I'll give them a little respect.

I've carried these pictures around with me for a long time. This is Tommy Dotson in Atmore-Holman prison. This is what a young Black man looks like after he's been beaten to death. This is George Dobbins, another brother from Atmore-Holman. This is what he looked like after he was beaten to death. If you want to see what Tommy Doston looked like before he was killed, this is his picture here. A young Black man with an Afro who believed that he had some human rights until Klansmen down there in Alabama decided otherwise. Somebody has got to pay for this.

You know, I can smile. I smile when I see my kids. I can smile when victories are won by the oppressed, like when Walter Sissulu and 7 other political prisoners were released from prison in South Africa last week. I enjoyed seeing that.

I am charged with membership in the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit and the United Freedom Front. I'm here to defend those organizations.



I'm here to defend what they are a part of. The actions of the SMJJ and UFF helped bring public attention to the role the U.S. government, its military and certain corporations with headquarters in the United States, have to play in the oppression of our people.

What is that role? Crimes against humanity and war crimes as defined by international law and universally accepted standards of human decency and human rights. These crimes have and continue to take place in South Africa, Central America and elsewhere.

I am here to return an indictment against the government of the United States and these corporations. I believe the evidence will show the government, in collusion with these corporations, operates a continuing criminal enterprise.

I know from my own background there a lot of people in this country who think our government is law abiding and peaceful. That's what I thought of my government before I went to Vietnam.

That's what I believed before I went to Vietnam. What did you do during the war? Any of you? Everybody did something or didn't do something.

In 1967 I was forever having implanted on my mind the faces of those Vietnamese children who were ravaged by the war. This government trained me to kill. I was ordered to kill for America, for all of you, just like other GI's who went to Vietnam. I didn't question the authority of those above me.

In Vietnam soldiers devalued the worth of another human being because of the color of their skin. That was my experience there. Racism made it easier to kill. Made it easier for us to oil the machinery of war. To us, the Vietnamese people were just "gooks" or "dinks". That's what we called them all the time. I'm only using that language now because people have to know. You have to know. I don't think that way now, but that's what was happening then.

Read my writings, which are in evidence. Read about man's inhumanity to man. I write about the bombings. The devastation.

I question authority now. Back then I didn't so I wasn't a problem. Now that I question it, I'm a problem. Now that I don't want to kill for them anymore, I'm a problem.

When I returned stateside, what was discouraging to me was the reaction of so many people that this was just some kind of conflict in a faraway land, which didn't have much to do with them. That was their attitude. It wasn't their kids being bombed or maimed. They're not doing the bleeding and their homes aren't being destroyed. They had more important things to do.

When I became an organizer for Vietnam Veterans Against the War, we tried to educate people to the realities of that illegal and immoral war. We tried to do it by utilizing our own experiences. And as I've said before, as with every political organization I was active with, we came under police surveillance and harassment. National VVAW, according to the FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] files I've looked at, became a target of COINTELPRO [Counter Intelligence Programs/FBI]. They wanted to

destroy our credibility as Vietnam veterans opposed to the war. But what the government and some corporations did from 1974 through 1984 is a continuation of that lie they tried to pass off as the Vietnam War.

I believe that the United States is today and was between 1974-1984 at war in Central America. The United Freedom Front responded.

May 11, 1983 the UFF began a series of bombings carried out against military facilities and corporations, which manufacture and supply weapons used against the people of Central America. The focus of the communiqués and other documents in evidence is U.S. involvement in El Salvador and the creation of a so-called "contra" army which is nothing but a group of hired mercenaries, paid killers, trained, armed and financed by the United States, which conducts military operations and acts of terrorism against the people of Nicaragua from their bases in Honduras.

The connection is important. It's one thing to look at atrocities and human rights violations over there somewhere. It's another thing to look at it when your own government is involved in it.

To begin with, this material in evidence shows that El Salvador receives hundreds of millions of dollars in direct military aid and weapons. No other country in Central America gets more. Salvadorian military officers and men are trained in the United States at U.S. military bases. This includes the Atlactl Battalion, which was directly responsible for a massacre in El Salvador's Morazan Province in which approximately 1,000 Salvadorian civilians were butchered.

That's what a massacre is, a slaughter of people on a large scale. They left their M-16 casings lying on the corpses. M-16 casings because they use M-16 rifles supplied to them by the United States. The Atlactl Battalion is accompanied in its operations by U.S. military advisors.



El Salvador is also the victim of the heaviest aerial bombardment in the Western Hemisphere. The planes they use are American made and supplied, as are the bombs and machine guns on the aircraft. The pilots are trained in the U.S. Before a plane can drop its bombs a reconnaissance plane must first sight the target. Those planes are flown by U.S. military pilots.

I tell you, when I was 19 years old, when I heard something like this -well, first of all I wouldn't have heard it. Second of all, if I happened to trip across it somewhere, I



wouldn't have believed it. Not until Vietnam. These planes are almost identical to the planes we used in Vietnam. A-37's powered by General Electric engines.

The victims are often civilians, as was the case in Vietnam. Most of them, children, women and old folks who are unwilling or unable to leave their villages. The casualty rates are enormous given the small size of the country. A proportionate number of casualties in this country, compared to El Salvador, would be in millions.

I want to show you a document that's in evidence: "A massacre in El Salvador's Morazan Province, December 1981." These photographs are of the peasants at Morazan Province. There are approximately 1,000, which I've referred to. This is what was left of them after U.S. trained soldiers with U.S. weapons visited these villages.

Look at this one here where they've been decapitated. These are children, they aren't adults. Do any of you know a child that's guilty of anything? Children are innocent, unless they come in the way of U.S foreign policy.

I know that this is not pleasant to look at, and you might say "no", my government can't be involved in something like that. You may want to consciously or subconsciously just not deal with it. But you see, that's the problem I had when I got back from Vietnam. People didn't want to deal with it. We were Vietnam veterans. We came back and said this is what's happening but all they wanted to do was train more 19 year old guys how to kill and send them back.

Now, where does this information come from? It comes from a variety of sources including the New York Times. Here is an article outlining the connection between the Atlactl Battalion and the United States government. Listed are the names of the victims that were able to be identified, including their ages. These are fetuses, then there are children 30 days old. The death list corresponds with most being children, women, and older men.

My inclination is to read this so everybody can hear it, these atrocities, but I'm not going to do that. However, I want to encourage you to look at this material during deliberations. Consider it when you're think about the purpose and intent of any defendant in this trial. Is it that of a racketeer or racketeering conspiracy?

It is also documented here that within 30-40 days after this massacre Ronald Reagan poured millions and millions of dollars into El Salvador.

There is material here on Archbishop Oscar Romero who at one time held the highest position in the Salvadorian Catholic Church. He advocated the church's involvement in the social welfare of its people. He was painfully aware of the human rights violations that were going on. He went so far as to speak of the right of insurrection to oppose the violence by the military. Archbishop Romero appealed publicly to the Salvadorian soldiers to stop killing their own people. Then he appealed for an end to U.S. military aid. He said, "I beseech you, I beg you, I order you in the name of God, stop the

repression." The following day he was murdered while saying mass in his church by one of those death squads that's connected to the CIA and our government.

There is a quote in a UFF communiqué which says, referring to the people of El Salvador, "Today, the suffering inflicted on our people is another dimension. It is real genocide."

Genocide is the deliberate extermination of a national, ethnic, religious or racial group of people. It can include killing, which is usually the favorite form, but is also involves causing serious bodily or mental harm to the people, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about their physical destruction.

In El Salvador it involves a policy of slaughtering animals, destroying food crops, destroying grain supplies, destroying any resource which can sustain life.

Again, I saw this in Vietnam. I saw what they called the "scorched earth policy", designed by some of our higher-ranking officials. It's not pretty at all. It wipes everything right out, whether they're using bombs, Agent Orange, napalm or whatever. There is nothing left. I used to fly in helicopters in Nam. You look down and there's nothing left where people used to be. That's another aspect of it. It creates a country of refugees.

While hundreds of millions of citizens' dollars from this country are poured into the pockets of the rulers of El Salvador, people go hungry. This item is in evidence, "The Hungriest People in Latin America, El Salvador." Look at this picture inside. These are 2 women that have been bound behind their backs. You see their thumbs tied with wire and they've been shot and left on the side of the road by one of the Salvadorian death squads. This is a common method of execution in El Salvador.

I believe U.S. policy in El Salvador is deliberate and calculated. It is directed from the highest levels of the United States government, including our president, who is Commander in Chief of the armed forces.

What has been the response of the United Freedom Front? Look at the communiqué. For example,





the communiqué involving the bombing of General Electric Corporation's offices of the Aerospace Strategic Planning and Aircraft Division in Long Island, New York.

What was the intent and purpose of the United Freedom Front? If you look at the communiqué, it says "This action is in response to the vicious escalation of the air war in El Salvador which in recent months alone has caused the deaths of hundreds of Salvadoran civilians, primarily children, women and elderly people who remain in the villages that are bombed".

There is a quote from George Jackson at the end, "People are already dying who could be saved, if you fail to act." and "U.S. out of El Salvador."

I look at that and it tells me the intent of the purpose of the bombing against the General Electric corporation.

Is it the intent and purpose of the United Freedom Front to stop genocide? Is it to stop the slaughter of innocent people? To pull the mask away from the General Electric corporation whose slogan says it "brings good things to life."

G.E. is one of the largest war manufactures in the country. It profits from these people's blood. It's got to stop.

There was some testimony that in Burlington, Vermont, there is a G.E. plant that makes machine guns which are mounted on the A-37 Dragonfly [aircraft used in El Salvador]. Do you think those workers realize that what they're producing is being used to kill peasants and workers in another country?

You have to look at the purpose and intent of the UFF. It is not to set up a racketeering enterprise or a racketeering conspiracy or to perpetuate corruption in our society. The purpose and intent is to expose and bring before the American people, the horrendous crimes being committed by our own government and ask that those crimes be stopped.

I want to now say a few words about Nicaragua. I must be brief because of time restraints. I feel very strongly about Nicaragua. I support Nicaragua and the Nicaraguan people.

In 1979 there was a revolution in Nicaragua. They threw out a brutal dictatorship under Somoza and the Sandinista government came to power. Somoza left the country with most of the treasury. The Nicaraguan people set out to rebuild their country.

There are two important things to note about the government of Nicaragua compared to U.S. allies in Central American such as El Salvador and Guatemala. One, the Nicaraguan government does not slaughter its own people; and two, Nicaragua is the only one of these countries in which the government directs social services to the poor. They have a literacy campaign. They distribute land to people, which is unprecedented among the U.S. allies there. They have improved health care.

Simply put, the United States has set up the contra army, as I said before, that is nothing but mercenaries. They're paid by the United States. They are paid to kill. What they do is attack Nicaragua across the border

from Honduras. Their favorite targets are not Nicaraguan soldiers. Their favorite targets are literacy workers, health care workers and farm workers.

I found out in Vietnam that is the way to terrorize people. To scare people. It's bad enough when you lose someone, your son or brother, who was a soldier. But, at least you feel like he was doing his duty. He was serving his country. Some purpose to it. But when civilians are deliberately killed there is no justification to it.

Keep in mind, Nicaragua is a focus of some of the communiqué. United States involvement with the Contras. Ronald Reagan said that the purpose of U.S. foreign policy involving the Contras was to overthrow the legitimately elected government of Nicaragua. I don't remember Reagan getting indicted for seditious conspiracy.

The U.S. is violating international law in supplying the contra army and they bear the responsibility for what they're doing.

The prosecutors have tried throughout the course of this trial to prevent you from hearing about human rights issues in South Africa.

I get upset just talking about this stuff and maybe you're getting a little tired hearing about human rights abuses involving our government. But I must draw your attention to South Africa, which is a major focus of the actions of the Sam Melville-Jonathan Jackson Unit and the United Freedom front.

I can understand the government's position. These prosecutors are paid by the government. They take their orders from the government, just like I used to. They're not used to telling their bosses at the U.S. Department of Justice, to go pound sand somewhere. When they're told to do something, they do it.

It's a career step for them as well. This trial is of incredible political importance. If they don't get convictions in this trial, they're going to be looking for a job somewhere else. The government has put over \$10 million dollars into this trial.

I'd like to draw your attention to the truth about the U.S. government's role in South Africa, and the role of some of these corporations.

The general assembly of the United Nations has condemned apartheid as a crime against humanity. The only political system outside of fascist Germany under Hitler that has been so condemned by the UN. The General Assembly has also condemned South Africa's main trading partners, including the United States, for their collaboration with apartheid. The fact is that freedom loving people all over the world condemn apartheid.

As I said in my opening, U.S. corporations have become the legs upon which apartheid walks. They supply the computers, the technology, the bank loans, the fuel, the military equipment, and the mining operations. Equally important is American political and moral support for apartheid.

I believe, and maybe some of you do, because it brings us close to the truth, that apartheid for Black people in South Africa is slavery. It is slavery. If you were living in a country where there was slavery, what would you



do? What would you have done in this country in the 1800's? Would it make any difference whether you were Black or white? Poor or rich?

I know one thing, if people in this country hadn't done something, slavery wouldn't have ended. It's going to end in South Africa, there is no question about that. Just how much blood is going to be spilled before they're free is another question.

But what to do? What does the SMJJ and UFF do? What was their intent and purpose in attacking the supporters of apartheid?

Apartheid in South Africa means African people cannot vote, though they are over three quarters of the population. Every Black person must carry a pass. They might change the appearance of it from time to time, but only Black people, African people, must carry this pass. Does that sound familiar? If you know anything about Nazi Germany and the system of identification used for Jewish people, then you know what I'm talking about because they used something very similar. Half the Black population of South Africa has at one time or another been arrested and imprisoned under this identification system.

Black people are arrested and detained without trial. Indefinitely. Torture is widely used against Black people. They have had their land stolen from them and many have been forcibly removed from their homes. In South Africa there are concentration camps known as bantustans.

That's just part of it. Remember, deliberately inflicting upon a particular group of people, particularly a racial group, conditions designed to bring its destruction is genocide. Just like what was charged against the Nazis. What was your position then and what is your position now? Do we allow it to happen? What did the SMJJ and UFF do? What was their intent and purpose?



There is willing and knowing collaboration between the government of the United States and certain U.S. corporations with apartheid. That subjects them to a liability and it subjects us, as American citizens, to certain moral obligations and responsibilities under international law. To stop these crimes. To take whatever steps are necessary to stop them.

In 1976 the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit exercised its responsibilities as did another group, which bombed Union Carbide offices in California. The SMJJ action was in response to a massacre, which took place in Soweto, South Africa in June 1976.

This is a picture of Hecter Peterson, the first person killed in that uprising. Just a child. Soweto is a watershed point in the history of the people of South Africa for their freedom. Thousands of Black students called a strike to boycott classes to protest the forced teaching of what they called the Afrikaans language in their schools. Afrikaans is the language of apartheid. It is the white man's language. To impose that language on African students who were denied using their own language was viewed as another step in destroying their culture. To destroy a people's culture is part of what constitutes genocide.

Those students were marching peacefully and they were attacked by South African police. Within weeks, approximately a thousand Black people were killed. Most were just school children and many were shot in the back. African students in the cross hairs of fascist police.

This document I hold high is entitled, "Apartheid: The Facts". The judge says you are triers of the facts. A lot of what's in here is true. It's independently corroborated by other material.

A thousand people, mostly children, shot in the back. I ask you, you live in and around Springfield, Massachusetts. Ask yourselves what would happen if a thousand people were killed in this city? If the police opened up on them because they were protesting a particular injustice. What would your reaction to that be? What would you do? Are the lives of people in Soweto, South Africa any less important than the people of Springfield, Massachusetts? I don't think so. I think we're all human beings and we all have a right to live.

Again, I want to direct your attention to SMJJ and UFF communiqués. After the Soweto massacre. The SMJJ communiqué states this action is done, "to protest the brutal murders of Black people in South Africa". It also states this action is done to "support the struggle of African people in South Africa for basic human rights and self-determination." Does that sound like the goal of a racketeering and corrupt organization? Does it seem like a pattern of racketeering?

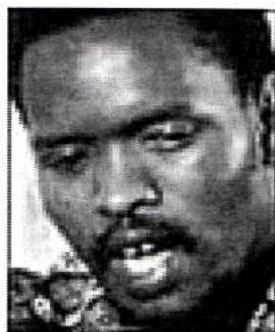
In December 1982, the UFF bombed the offices of the South African government in New York City. First of all, what is an office of the South African government doing in New York? It's unfortunate our government lets them operate there with impunity but it does. Well they paid for it. They couldn't do business as usual for awhile. This action was in response to



other massacres. Read the names, Steven Biko, Emma Sathedgeke and others. There are many others. Did these names mean anything to you before you read this material? The connection between government, corporations and apartheid, what did that mean to you before you read this material?

Steven Biko, at the time of his death was the most influential Black leader in South Africa. That's with all due respect to Nelson Mandela. The most influential Black leader in South Africa was beaten to death in his cell.

This is a picture of Steven Biko. There are many articles here: "Biko saw that U.S. policy failed in South Africa." "U.S. policy is a shame." A picture of his funeral. Why did I save them? Because Steven Biko meant something to me. He meant something to the struggle. He meant a great deal to Black people fighting for their rights in South Africa.



*Steven Biko*

If you want to read about South Africa and the U.S. connection then read this [holding document]. It will tell you how people are being tortured and who is supplying the material. This is an [electric] cattle prod. These cattle prods used to be used down south. Now they use stun guns and they use them up north as well. They've used them on me. Remember the incident you heard about in this courtroom where the FBI agent was testifying how I was chained and shackled and hit with a stun gun. They have 40,000 volts in them. Enough to knock you to the ground. That was only one incident in which the FBI has attacked me in that way.

These are United Nations documents. Read what the UN has to say about repression in South Africa. "IBM, U.S. Computer exports to South Africa, the arms embargo". This is an extensive analysis on the role of IBM in South Africa. IBM was a target of the United Freedom Front.

You know, if people are being put in gas ovens, are killed, the manufacturers of those ovens and the suppliers bear some responsibility. If IBM technology, equipment and computers are being used to do the same thing in South Africa, they bear a responsibility for that.

Intent and purpose. You've heard me mention the international law and the obligations under it. You heard me mention crimes against humanity and war crimes. I know this law exists, but even if it didn't exist I'd do what I do anyway.

Che Guevara said that "above all, always be capable of feeling deeply any injustice committed against anyone, anywhere in the world. This is the most beautiful quality of a revolutionary." As a revolutionary, I take this sentiment very seriously. This is the way I think. This is the way I feel. I believe the mind knows only what lies near the heart.

Everyday when I get up, when I rise, I feel the suffering of people in South Africa, Central America and on the streets of this country. Every day

the violence being inflicted on these people is staggering. The victims are primarily peasants and workers.

I am the factory worker. I am the farm worker, the prisoner, the veteran, and the unemployed. The person living on the edge of someone else's dream. I want to do everything I can, however small a contribution that might be, to bring this suffering to an end.

Martin Luther Ling, Jr. said there is nothing wrong with a traffic law that says you have to stop for a red light. But when a fire is raging, the fire truck goes right through that red light. He added that people all over the world are bleeding to death from deep social and economic wounds. They need brigades of ambulance drivers who will have to ignore the red lights of the present system. Martin Luther King advocated and participated in civil disobedience and for his commitment, he was destroyed.

I believe in civil disobedience when the time, place and conditions warrant it but also I believe in civil resistance. By that I mean that we cannot let the illegal and immoral acts of our own government go unpunished. If it takes armed actions or armed resistance to make this government accountable to the needs of the people, then it isn't just what should be done, it will be done.

The judge calls you triers of the facts. He says you are the constitutional expression of justice. He says your verdict, should you arrive at a verdict, must be just and fair.

To see that justice is served you must also look at the truth. I am already serving a 45-year sentence.

[Interruption by the court: I am the one who must instruct and teach us as to the law under our system. Your comments are stricken.]

Well, I'll have to skip some things here. But let me say this. Without significant political changes in this country, which will result in the release of political prisoners, the government is going to achieve its goal that I die in prison. I could end up dying of old age or I could die like Comrade George Jackson or the brothers of Attica, swept up in the coming rebellions that are sure to rage through this country's prisons.

If you collaborate with the government, it's a different story. Like Linda Coleman, Felipe Noguera and Joseph Aceto, you get rewarded for being a snitch. You get paid off. Otherwise, you get hurt. The government wants to me bleed. If I'm already in prison, and I have been since November 1984, how are they going to make me bleed? You can only kill someone so many times, right?

Linda Coleman testified. She collaborated. One of the reasons she became an informant is she didn't want to do 60 years in prison. She didn't want to be a co-defendant here. How are they going to make me bleed at this point in time? They do that by making Patricia, our children and families suffer. That's been their tactic time and time again. They want to make me bleed that much because of what I've put this government through for the past 21 years.



Patricia has already spent 3 and a half years in prison for harboring a fugitive. That was me, the father of our children. She went to prison for 3 and a half years because she wouldn't give me up and she wouldn't set me up.

When you do time in prison, your family and children do time with you.

I bear a lot of the responsibility for raising a family in the situation I was in. My oldest daughter, who is almost 14, now asked me, why? Why? I told her simply that when she was born and I held her in my arms, I couldn't let her go.

Why does a person who lives in a ghetto or reservation have children? Look at the way you live. What kind of future you got, what are your hopes? Why does a person living in a neighborhood saturated with crack have children? Sure, it's difficult.

Why do people have children? Because they love children. And why don't you give them up for adoption to some rich folks? Because it is too painful.

I thought I was able to protect my family. For many years I did, until I was captured. Then it became open season for the government. The cruelty of this government, evident in so many parts of the world, knows no restraints other than what we the people can put on it.

I now want to say a few words about informants. I want to say something about the government witnesses. I would like for you to note that the government's number one snitch, Joseph Aceto, never testified in this trial. This is a person in the custody of the government who has allegedly participated in predicate acts in this case.

If you had a person who allegedly participated directly in any of the acts in this case, why wouldn't you bring him in to testify? Why would you make a circumstantial case for yourself?

Aceto has already spent a lot of time on the government's payroll. Remember the scenario Coleman testified about. She said Aceto went to the FBI and cooperated with them and in turn the FBI began to pressure Coleman. As a result, Coleman turned on me.

I think the government's problem is that Aceto can't distinguish between what's real and what his fantasies are. That the government has him a little too doped up with tranquilizers.

He's a known government informant. He's testified against others in previous trials. I want you to think about why the government would rely on somebody like Noguera and Coleman when they could bring in a person they say directly participated in something. If Aceto was with me in a bank robbery, why isn't he here talking about it? What's the government trying to hide now? At the very least it seems Aceto's credibility, his market value, has taken a nose dive. If they're not marketable, they lose their importance to the government and they become expendable.

Then there's Felipe Noguera, the self admitted liar and perjurer. He faced over 100 years in prison for committing perjury until he gave the

government what they wanted. Noguera provided information, for whatever that information is worth, which can be used against anyone, including me, and I never saw the guy in my life until the day he walked into court.

Noguera snitched on his girlfriend, his best friend Kazi Toure, as well as political associates and organizations including the Black United Front. He's now a pariah in the movement. He has no credibility left. He's a "chota", a known informant.

And when you think about it what was so relevant about his testimony, the government had to break the man the way they did. That he took some license plates? That's real serious business! That he was given a gun? Noguera was given a gun at his own request and was shown how to use it. At a time, according to his testimony that "Black people were being killed everywhere."

I would suggest that part of his testimony is true. Some of the other material in evidence supports this. He didn't want to become another Black person going to an early grave, like Levi Hart. He came to testify against people who had shown him how to defend himself.

This is what Felipe Noguera was concerned about. This is a picture of the Black community in Boston rallying to protest the murder of a 14 year-old Black boy shot to death by a Boston police officer. Levi Hart was not armed.

This is a picture of the police officer who shot Levi Hart. He's shown here celebrating with champagne with his wife. He got away with it. They called it justifiable homicide. This is what Noguera was concerned about.

He was shown the basics of how to defend himself. He learned. He was given a gun because he was concerned about being attacked because he was Black and politically active. That's a very volatile combination.

These clippings I now hold in my hand document the police killings of unarmed Black and Third World people in various parts of this country, although the primary focus is on the Northeast.

This is a graphic artist's picture of the killing of Michael Stewart, a young Black man, who was beaten to death by the New York City Transit police for writing graffiti on the walls of the subway. The death of Michael Stewart was raised in one of the communiqués of the United Freedom Front, along with the death of our comrade Mytari Sundiata.

The real damage the government inflicts when it turns people into informants is they destroy the trust upon which a relationship is built and nourished. They drive a wedge between brothers and sisters, parents and children, between neighbors and workers. Did you ever try to organize a union with a company snitch working on the same floor shop? Maybe some of you have had experiences like that.

The erosion of trust begins with the seeds planted by the informant. The informant undermines fundamental values of trust, community, solidarity, and respect. In the wake of what the informant does, the government moves in to solicit and recruit. The prosecutor talked about the intent [of the



defendants] to recruit Noguera. But who really recruited Noguera? The United States government. They played Noguera like a puppet. They got him in a situation where they could break him, and they broke him. Felipe Noguera is a broken man. Once they broke him, they used him.

Linda Coleman. She was the woman who was going to have her baby in Framingham prison unless she did what the government wanted. This judge was going to accommodate the government by ordering her in prison during her pregnancy if she refused to testify. You can imagine Linda Coleman pregnant and some nameless, faceless man in a robe is going to order her to prison unless she cooperates. That's the power of life and death over a person because having a baby in prison is a high-risk ordeal.

Linda Coleman is from a wealthy family. I visited her family home once and one of the dining rooms was large enough to contain the entire apartment that my Ma and Grandma lived in. Linda and I are from different sides of the tracks.

But I was very close to her at one time. I admired her commitment to work with the poor. When she became involved with SCAR and the Red Star North bookstore she knew it was a dangerous time for the organization. She was well aware of that. Remember the circumstances in which she met me - at a demonstration protesting police brutality and the formation of a death squad among the Portland police department.

I taught her how to defend herself and I shared organizational skills with her. But when Aceto set her up and the FBI started to press her, she turned on me. She gave me up so she could return to the wealth that she was born into. So she could return to her class and the protection, which that class provides for her. If it was Patricia who decided to give me up, she wouldn't be a defendant in this trial either.

The American Revolution was begun when people rebelled against the authority of the King of England. I think that's something we all learned in school. These American revolutionaries believed so strongly in this right to rebel, they wrote it into the Declaration of Independence. They had that right. Though I believe they had the right, the conditions under which they were living were not as severe as the conditions experienced by Native Americans. Or those in slavery, or others as time passed.

You are all participating in a political trial. You are direct participants. I don't disassociate myself from my political beliefs or what I've done with my life, and in that respect there's a good part of my life that's on trial. This trial is important and perhaps it will even make a little footnote in history. You all have to decide which side of history you're going to come down on.

You've heard what the government has to say. You've heard what I have to say. Some of you, maybe all of you, question whether my political commitment involves sedition. That's up to you.

But racketeering and corruption, never! We're not even on trial for conspiracy to commit arson or conspiracy to commit bank robbery. We're on trial for conspiracy to commit racketeering. Examine the intent and

purpose. I don't think, not in the name of justice, can there be a conviction in this case for racketeering and corruption.

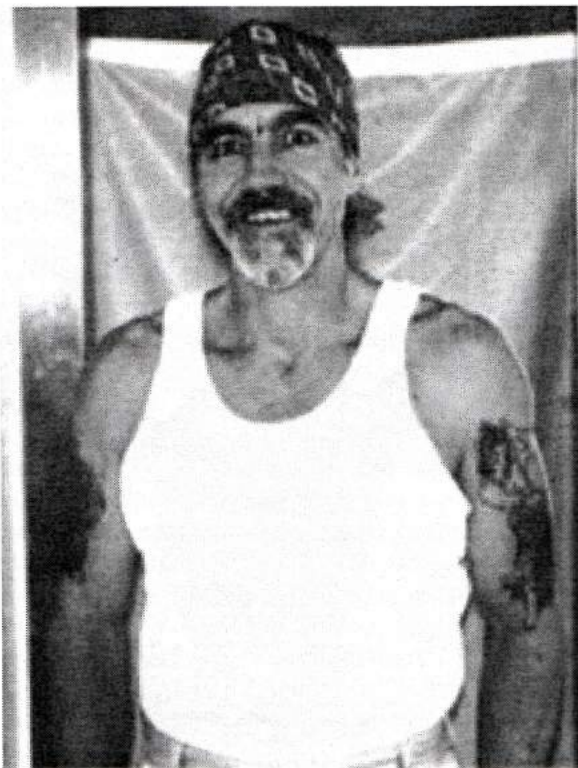
The history of the human race has been a struggle. A struggle for the removal of the physical and sometimes spiritual oppression that exists among so many of us. I feel I would have failed had I not made a contribution to that struggle. I'll always be glad I did.

Raymond Luc Levasseur  
November 1, 1989  
United States Courthouse  
Springfield, Massachusetts



*POSTSCRIPT: This case began with eight defendants but only three stood trial. All three were acquitted of sedition. The jury could not reach a verdict on the RICO charges against Levasseur and Williams and the charges were dismissed. Gros was acquitted of one RICO count and the second RICO count was dismissed when the jury could not reach a verdict. Prior to the trial all charges were dropped against Manning, Laaman and Curzi. Toure and Soucier-Manning pleaded guilty to the charge and received sentences from which they were subsequently paroled. Curzi was also released on parole. Levasseur, Manning, Laaman and Williams remain in prison. At a 1985-86 Brooklyn, NY trial they were convicted and given lengthy prison sentences for action carried out by the United Freedom Front.*





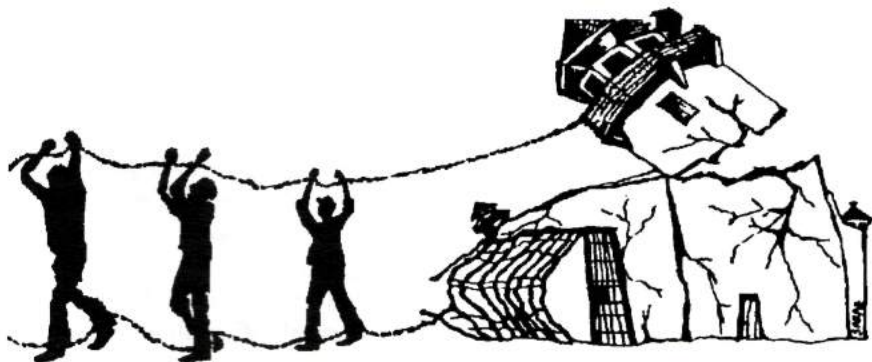
# Letter From Exile: The Reef

As some of you know I've been in prison for political offenses since 1984. I was tried and acquitted of sedition. As the government stated in its indictment, our "revolutionary anti-imperialist organization" sought to challenge its authority to kill with impunity in Central America. I was convicted of bombing military facilities in an effort to expose U.S. war crimes against the people of El Salvador, Nicaragua and Guatemala. I was convicted of actions taken against American corporations whose power and products strengthened the racist apartheid system in South Africa.

For this I'm supposed to suffer and die in prison. The trial judge recommended that I never be paroled, that I remain in prison until "expiration" of my 45 year sentence, if I don't expire of something else doing that kind of time.

To punctuate their hatred of what they perceive to be my political beliefs and associations, the government sent me to their worst prison, the infamous Marion in 1986. When the government built an ever higher tech, mind numbing penitentiary called Administrative Maximum (ADX) at Florence, Colorado, I was sent there in 1995. As some of you know, I've written extensively about human rights violations, and the counterproductive, spirit-crushing nature of such prisons.

On August 20, 1999, after many long years of isolation and close confinement, where walls were never more than a few steps away, I was transferred from ADX to the maximum security penitentiary at Atlanta, Georgia. Built in 1905, Atlanta has held other political prisoners including Eugene Debs (a socialist), Alexander Berkman (an anarchist), and Pedro Albizu Campos (Puerto Rican Nationalist). Federal prisons have always served as way stations for revolutionaries and dissidents from "Wobblies" (Industrial Workers of the World) to draft resisters.







Immediately upon my arrival here I was placed in segregation - the hole. I was told by a representative of the administration that because of my extensive history of radical activism, and the many years I spent in their worst prisons, I would remain in the hole for months before serious consideration would be given to releasing me into the prison general population.

Segregation conditions at Atlanta are among the worst I've experienced. Every U.S. Supreme Court judge should be required to sleep on a cell floor as I did, smell shit backed up in the toilet,

leave the cell to walk in an outside kennel cage three hours a week (if the guards are up to giving you that much). Maybe then we'd see some humanity from the robed ones.

I had to challenge what was becoming an increasingly volatile situation. There is nothing prison administrators fear more than solidarity among prisoners and a penetrating look at their operations from people outside the walls. Aware of this, friends and supporters initiated a campaign to get me out of the hole. This campaign was successful and I was released from segregation in December 1999, albeit under restrictive conditions. I can see the moon now, something I've gone years without being able to do. I'd still be in the hole were it not for the efforts of so many caring and committed people whose collective voice was felt from the U.S. penitentiary at Atlanta to the Bureau of Prisons in Washington, D.C. It was a voice to behold. Lest we succumb to that ubiquitous skepticism or the slippery slope of cynicism that too often mines the field of political activism, the notion that writing a letter of protest or support, or performing some other seemingly mundane task is wasted effort - we just proved otherwise. Struggle brings results, and all struggles begin with a first step and advance through commitment, work and sacrifice. And it's in this spirit that we can save our brother Mumia Abu-Jamal from the state's executioner and ultimately free all political prisoners.

A single coral is infinitesimally small, but a coral reef is able to alter the ocean's current. Our little campaign to get me out of the hole built a big enough reef to alter the prison administration's designs on me. I am grateful to all who made this possible and thank those of you in Madison who pitched in, including you who at various times over the years sent me cards and letters, books and periodicals, kind words and encouragement. Some of you have remained active on various fronts and I take heart when I see you do not stand idly by when the system attempts to crush life with police power

and dollar signs. I also want to thank the folks at WORT radio - past and present - who've allowed issues like that of political prisoners to be aired, issues which would not have otherwise seen the light of day.

Someone wrote to me recently asking me whether I thought the militancy of the anarchists/youth at the anti-WTO demonstrations in Seattle was counterproductive. My response to that is a resounding NO. And it's not even a matter of whether I personally agree or disagree with the tactic of smashing windows that reflect corporate profits over human needs. Destroying corporate property to make a political point has a long history among the oppressed. And it most certainly is not the major contradiction. The major contradiction is corporate power raping the earth, bankrolled by the sweat of underpaid and abused workers. It's not militancy that threatens to pull the plug on the American Left, but rather the lack of militancy and sustained activism. As the saying goes - think globally and act locally. Too often we fail to act on issues confronting us in our own communities, whether it be police brutality, jail and prison conditions, homelessness and affordable housing, labor activism and jobs, taking back the night, environmentalism, etc. Amidst the current weakness of the Left, the rule of thumb should not so much be ideology and party line as time, place and conditions. The duty of the activist is to be active. I'd rather see someone cross a police line than wallow in apathy.

The last time I was in the city of Atlanta was in 1969. It was April, the first anniversary of Martin Luther King Jr.'s assassination. I was here with a contingent of the Southern Student Organizing Committee. We gathered at the Ebenezer Baptist Church and marched to the state capital buildings, which were ringed by Georgia State Police. We were in Atlanta to honor Dr. King and press on for civil rights and opposition to the Vietnam war. Between the church and state capital we stopped outside the county jail for a solidarity demonstration with prisoners inside. Thirty years ago there was a different consciousness about the role of prisoners in the pursuit of basic civil and human rights. They were seen as a potential part of the solution - not as part of the problem that deserved to be ostracized and forgotten. Now there are 2 million prisoners in America - 25% of the world's entire prison population. The wages they receive for their forced labor is on par with and often less than what NIKE pays its Asian shoe and clothing workers. How do we continue to ignore exploitation on such a scale?

Thirty years ago our battles were about human rights, and they're about human rights today. It's about daring to struggle for these rights if we want to win. It's about acting on principle and sound strategies, rather than generating antagonistic divisions through over-inflated rhetoric. It's about Attica being all of us and Mumia being our brother. It's about a future for children that embraces peace, justice and freedom.

Atlanta Federal Prison





**new from**



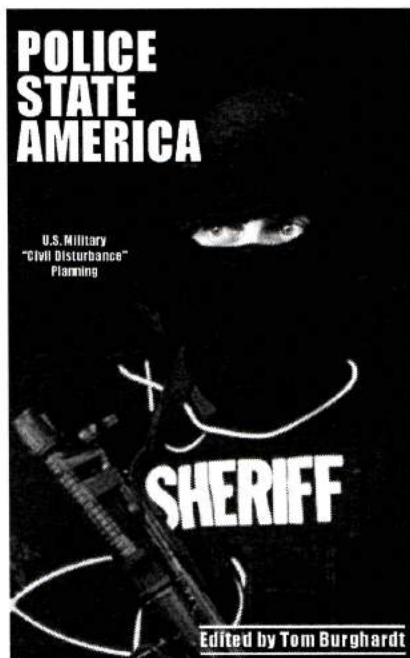
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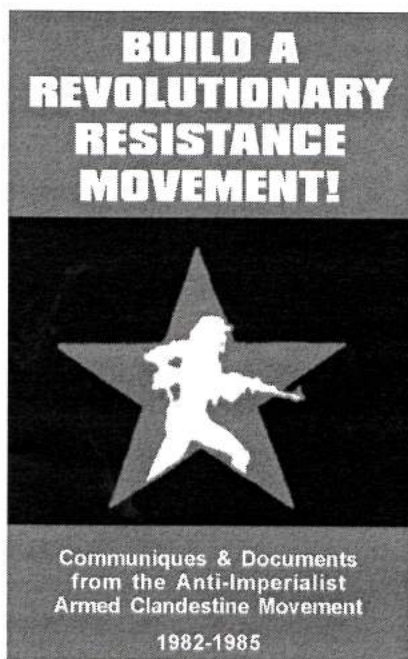
What we are dealing with in fact is an intensification of the military character of the police, a "gloves-off" exposure of the military character of the police, in a period during which the need for state repression to enforce economic exploitation has grown considerably. We can liken this understanding to a correct handle on the question of "globalization." Capitalism has always been a global system, from its

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# **Solidarity★**

*Solidarity* is a small-scale publishing collective in Montreal that with a focus on revolutionary left anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist, anti-patriarchy politics, and political prisoners. Working with *Arm The Spirit* we are publishing numerous pamphlets and books, and on the internet to further the political development of the North American left. Many of these publications are histories of various important revolutionary groups, or writings by participants. We also fundraise for political prisoners thru sales of publications, for the Zapatistas with the sale of a benefit t-shirt, distribute numerous videos, and maintain our website that includes a wealth of downloadable information. Join our mailing list by writing to the address below.

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## **Arm The Spirit**

Arm The Spirit is an autonomist/anti-imperialist information collective based in Toronto, Canada. Our focus includes a wide variety of material, including political prisoners, national liberation struggles, armed communist resistance, anti-fascism, the fight against patriarchy, and more. We regularly publish our writings, research, and translation materials on our listserv called ATS-L. We also publish pamphlets and books as part of a joint project with Solidarity, a Montreal-based group. For more information, contact:

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Ray Luc Levasseur is a Vietnam veteran, a former organiser for Vietnam Veterans Against The War, and revolutionary. He has been a political prisoner since 1984, accused of membership in the Sam Melville/Jonathan Jackson Unit and United Freedom Front. These were revolutionary anti-imperialist organisations that carried out actions in the 1970s and 80s against apartheid in South Africa, U.S. intervention in Central America and to support Puerto Rico's independence.



*"I've gone into those factories, those mills, those fields. I've sweat for the boss and know what it's like. I was in the Army, was in Vietnam. I had to serve this government when they required it. I've been in their jails and prisons. This is how I came to understand what I refer to as the class struggle and class conflict, and this is how I became a revolutionary."*

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